The Pulpit

LIBRARY
PACIFIC SCHOOL
OF RELIGION

A Journal of Contemporary Preaching

Nels F. S. Ferré:

Christianity Among the World Religions

Paul Waitman Hoon • The Soul's Invincible Surmise
Arthur A. Rouner, Jr. • Wrestling with Angels
Walter R. Wietzke • Ready for Either
George Gerald Parker • The New Life in Christ
Thomas H. F. Masson • Flesh and Spirit
Bevel Jones • Is Your God Obsolete?

KENNETH E. SMITH
PHILOSOPHY AND THE PULPIT

VOL. XXXII, No. 9 SEPTEMBER 1961

The Pulpit

Founded 1929 by Charles Clayton Morrison as a journal of contemporary preaching.

KYLE HASELDEN, Editor

HAROLD E. FEY, *Contributing Editor*

MARTIN E. MARTY, *Contributing Editor*

MARJORIE L. BROWN, *Copy Editor*

LEONARD S. MEYER, *Business Manager*

Editorial Associates

Conrad Bergendoff, Pres., Augustana College
Oscar F. Blackwelder, Reformation Lutheran, Washington, D. C.
Harold A. Bosley, First Methodist, Evanston, Ill.
George A. Buttrick, Harvard University
Henry Hitt Crane, Pastor Emeritus, Central Methodist, Detroit
Edwin T. Dahlberg, Delmar Baptist, St. Louis
Russell V. DeLong, Pres., Pasadena Nazarene College
Theodore P. Ferris, Trinity Church, Boston
C. Willard Fetter, First E.U.B., Dayton
Jack Finegan, Pacific School of Religion
O. A. Geiseman, Grace Lutheran, River Forest, Ill.
E. S. Hjortland, United Ev. Lutheran, Oak Park, Ill.
E. G. Homrighausen, Princeton Theological Seminary
Ernest Marshall Howse, Bloor St. United Church, Toronto
William H. Hudnut, Jr., Third Presbyterian, Rochester
Gerald Kennedy, Bishop, Los Angeles Area, Methodist Church
Harold L. Lunger, Brite College of the Bible, Fort Worth
George A. Mastrantonis, St. Nicholas Eastern Orthodox, St. Louis
Benjamin E. Mays, Pres., Morehouse College
Robert J. McCracken, Riverside Church, New York
Frederick M. Meek, Old South Church, Boston
Roy Pearson, Dean, Andover Newton Theological School
Harold C. Phillips, Brown Visiting Professor of Homiletics, Union Theological Seminary, New York
James A. Pike, Episcopal Bishop of Calif., San Francisco
Liston Pope, Dean, Yale Divinity School
Edward Hughes Pruden, First Baptist, Washington, D. C.
Paul M. Robinson, Pres., Bethany Biblical Seminary
Frederick W. Schroeder, Pres., Eden Theological Seminary
Ralph W. Sockman, Christ Methodist, New York
Alan Walker, Supt., Central Methodist Mission, Sydney, Australia

35 cents single issue.

$4 a year in U.S.A. and Canada.

$4.50 foreign.

Copyright © 1961 by the Christian Century Foundation. All rights reserved under the International Copyright Union, the Universal Copyright Convention and the Pan-American Copyright Convention. Second-class postage paid at Chicago, Ill., and at additional mailing offices.

Published monthly by the Christian Century Foundation, 407 S. Dearborn St., Chicago 5, Ill. HArrison 7-5380.

CONTENTS: SEPTEMBER 1961

SERMONS

Christianity Among the World Religions, *Nels F. S. Ferré* 4
The Soul's Invincible Surmise ..... *Paul Waitman Hoon* 10
Wrestling with Angels ..... *Arthur A. Rouner, Jr.* 13
Ready for Either ..... *Walter R. Wietzke* 15
The New Life in Christ ..... *George Gerald Parker* 18
Flesh and Spirit ..... *Thomas H. F. Masson* 20
Is Your God Obsolete? ..... *Bevel Jones* 22

ARTICLES

Philosophy and the Pulpit ..... *Kenneth E. Smith* 7
The Classical Approach to Homiletics .. *Vernon L. Taylor* 24

FEATURES

Pulpit Post 2
Editorial 3
Thoughts on Preaching, 6, 21
Prayers 8, 9
The Mourners Bench 17
Pulpit Calendar 26
Book Reviews 28

PULPIT POST

Who Was Joses?

SIR: Let me say as I renew my subscription that I had intended to renew the Christian Century subscription only. I had tried The Pulpit for a year (after a lapse of some years) but had not found it very helpful. However, the June issue changed my mind. Your courageous editorial is to be warmly commended, as is Kish's outspokenness. A number of the other contributions are excellent although Hill's theology makes me shiver.

Alan Walker might have documented his sermon. He says [p. 17, col. 1], "We know that he had a friend during university days, Joses, who became a Christian. . . ." Do we really? I thought I was reasonably familiar with Acts and the Epistles, and I have certainly read a considerable number of "Lives of Paul," but I don't know anything of the kind. However, it's a good sermon.

W. G. ONIONS
Oxford United Church
Winnipeg, Man., Can.

Yes, Where?

SIR: I have been tardy in sending in my renewal because of indifference to The Pulpit. The published sermons have frequently caused me to wonder where the able preachers of the U.S. are today. It appears that they are not contributing to this magazine as they did in years past. At one time I found it a very helpful, inspirational magazine. It contained sermons that were timely and challenging and I felt that I owed much to it. It stimulated my thinking and gave me many ideas for sermons. I confess that it has been of little help lately. This comment is not made without considerable thought and the desire to be constructive.

W. GORDON PROSSER
Centennial United Church
Stayner, Ont., Can.

Great Demand, Little Supply

SIR: I am a subscriber to The Pulpit and am interested in the variety of sermons you publish in your magazine. I do not pretend to be the most astute critic in the United Presbyterian denomination; however, my sensitivity to sermonic endeavors is so often left unsatisfied by many of the efforts which I read in The Pulpit.

I realize that my expectations may

(Continued on page 31)

The Pulpit

A Journal of Contemporary Preaching

VOLUME XXXII SEPTEMBER 1961 No. 9

Flight From Prophecy

I MUST maintain communication with my people." Time and again this is the response of the minister who has been challenged to step out of his ministerial anonymity and the security of silence and champion some radical but plainly Christian position. The city hotels and restaurants do not accommodate Negroes; the local YMCA is showing "Operation Abolition"; the Christian Anti-Communism Crusade is in town, dividing churches, smearing innocent reputations; the town fathers have repeatedly betrayed their trust; local union 74 is on strike and there is a bitter mood rising in the community. Someone should speak; someone with a respected voice should speak loud and clear; someone who can shed the light of the gospel or the compassion of the gospel or the judgment of the gospel should speak. But the minister of First Church is silent. Ask him about it and there are two chances out of three that in one way or another he will reply, "I must maintain communication with my people."

Disregard at once the respondents who are merely hypocritical in this reply. There are some, but not many. For these few the pat answer is an escape, a refuge, a dodge. There is a modicum of truth in it and they can rely upon that truth to conceal the true motivation of their silence and their inactivity. Dismiss also those who give this answer out of selfishness. They are more, but not many. They have a good thing in their churches and they know it and they are not about to let immoderate words or unconventional acts jeopardize their sinecures. Dismiss as well those who want to speak and act in Christ's name but are muted by fear. They are even more numerous, but still only a fraction of those who say, "I must maintain . . . etc . . ." It isn't easy: a wife to support, two children ready for college, a cantankerous bishop to please, the payments on the car, a building fund newly launched — these things can "make cowards of us all." If we could only preach as we should preach, live as a minister of Jesus Christ should live and — "get away with it." Why does duty so often come to us in the shape of a cross?

But of the many who say, "I must maintain communication with my people," what shall we say about those who have a pastor's big, warm heart, who sincerely dread nothing so much as estrangement from their people, who know that a shepherd can get so far ahead of the sheep that they no longer hear his voice — what about them?

It should be said first that few human relationships are quite so precious as that one which should and often does develop between a minister and the members of his church. Eighteen months out of the parish ministry now, the thing I miss most is the sound of the word *pastor*. The confidence of a congregation, so gratuitous and often so unmerited, must be handled as the sacred gift it is. None but the callous will treat it contemptuously; none but the prodigal will lightly toss it away.

Even so, who are "my people"? Is the minister's duty limited to those who belong to his church and pay its bills? Is he not also sent to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel," to the Gentiles who ask only for the crumbs beneath the table? He may have a contract which binds him to some people but he is under a covenant which binds him to all people. The poor, the brokenhearted, the captives, the blind, the bruised — must he not under that covenant maintain communication with *them*. They, too, whether in the church or out of it, are "my people."

Moreover, within the fellowship to which he is assigned, within the local congregation, "my people" will always include some, a remnant, who are taking the ethical imperatives of Jesus Christ seriously, who are taking in the community and under Christ's bidding the hazardous step and are speaking the courageous word. They are trying in their faltering way to live out daily the ethical implications of the teaching and the spirit of Christ. They are venturing into areas of Christian witness and Christian service where the minister is inactive and about which he is silent. Does not his dignified and calculated withdrawal break his communication with *them?* Willy-nilly, when the issues arise, he must break communication with *someone;* he cannot at all times be all things to all men. With whom shall he stand? With those who are earnestly seeking to do his

(Continued on page 23)

Christianity Among the World Religions

By Nels F. S. Ferre

Do you suppose God is the God of the Jews alone? Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Certainly, of Gentiles also, if it be true that God is one. Romans 3:29-30 (New English Bible).

IF THE world survives and unless civilization is set back beyond present imagination we Christians shall have to decide what we are going to do about the world's religions. This decision is now inescapable and there are four major choices.

The first choice, which seems obvious, is that the Christian faith alone is true and that all other religions are pagan and false. I reject this answer on two grounds: it is unbiblical and must be rejected from within the faith itself. Paul has given us the final, definitive answer: If it be true that God is one, then all who worship him must in some way worship the one God. I also reject this answer because it makes Christianity esoteric; that is, it makes it a private and partial affair. If God is creator of all the ends of the earth, religion is essential to all and is God's call on all people. The religions of the world then spring necessarily as a response to God's call to all people. As man's need for God, religion is the deepest drive of human nature. There can be no more a Hindu, a Christian or a Bahai medicine of immortality than there can be a Chinese, Aryan or Indian cure for cancer.

The second answer to the relation between the Christian faith and the religions of the world is that there is a common center of truth deep within all religions, although all religions of course come in relative form. Now I reject this highly inviting answer also, and this on two grounds. First, it is too intellectualistic without sufficient awareness of the concrete nature of the religions themselves. Whatever method we use to ascertain the common truth we can never find it, for religion is not basically a matter of reason. God is not mind, and religion is no system of reason. I am saying more — if I have to be technical for just a moment — than denying that all religious normativeness or standard is rational in nature; I am affirming actually that basically religion is not a matter of truth, but that religion is a matter of life. Now this position of a common center of truth contained deep within all religions, beneath their relative form, also fails to understand that man's sinfulness makes such a center impossible. Man fights and flees God. Yes, man even hates God, perhaps especially within his religions, and therefore the deeper center of the religions do not, so to speak, coincide and in their coinciding point to God. Religion is man's response in sin and fear as well, and therefore the religions keep diverging; they don't necessarily converge and point to one God.

I

The first false theory was that one religion alone is true and God is not related at all to the other religions. They are just pagan and false. I have rejected this on biblical grounds and because then religion would not be essential to all people. The second theory is that there is a common and deep truth among all religions, and that we can somehow find it, although all religions are relative. But I have also denied that, for the two reasons I have just given: religion is not intellectual basically, and man is sinful. Now a third answer is to the effect that all religions are relative and, coming out of their own culture, each religion is best for its own people. I reject that also — and confidently — on two grounds. Such relativism, which we usually call pluralism, denies the essential nature of religion. It is better, I believe, than calling just one religion true, because at least this position universalizes relativity. I am going to suggest, in the second place, that there is a common center, not *in* the religions, but *for* the religions.

One form of religious pluralism is Hinduism's claim for universality, because it says it is inclusive of all the religions. Or my friend Paul Tillich's calling Christianity ultimate because Christianity refuses, he says, to make itself ultimate. In the

---

NELS F. S. FERRE *delivered this sermon before the Chicago Sunday Evening Club, Orchestra Hall, Chicago, on April 23, 1961. Abbot professor of Christian theology at Andover Newton Theological School, Dr. Ferré is well known as a lecturer and is the author of numerous books on religion and Christianity, latest of which is* Searchlights on Contemporary Theology *(Harper).*

cross, Dr. Tillich says, Christianity dies to its sinful pretension to ultimacy and rises in this death to the true ultimacy, knowing that no religion is ultimate. But, analytically, both these claims to ultimacy conceal behind a positive verbal facade their implicit espousal of relativism.

Hinduism and Tillich are, in fact, guilty of what I'm beginning to call the "illicit infinite." They claim that the infinite cannot be refined by a relative or in relation to the finite, without becoming limited by it. But the infinite that does not include and thoroughly interpenetrate the finite that we do know, we know isn't infinite! Isn't that right? Certainly it can't be infinite if it does not include the being that we now know and relate itself to it positively, and therefore we know that they are operating with an illicit infinite. This illicit infinite leads to the great negation that God can't be reliably known; and the great negation that God can't be reliably known leads to the great refusal to try to find out how he is known.

The fourth position — to which I subscribe — is that there once was a concrete life, that at its center, conclusively suggested in life and teaching the universal love of God, a life of outgoing, inclusive, unconditional concern, engendering an open community of creative concern, which is normative *for* all religions. That is what I believe. I believe that this life, Jesus as the Christ, is normative for *all* religions. This concrete center, not *in* the religions but *for* all religions, at the same time rejects the concrete formulations and actual behavior of all religions and also accepts them for revision and fulfillment, both in reorientation and in remotivation and their own deepest potential.

II

In other words, what is *truest* in the religions is not *central* either to their thinking or to their living. Now the fact that Christ is not *in* but *for* all religions demands a radical reappraisal and retooling of all religions.

Judaism, in love to God and neighbor, feels for God's universal love at its deepest potential; but Judaism has always rejected this answer by actual nationalistic, cultural and religious in-groupism. While accepting its own past and its own cultural past, Judaism can turn itself inside out; and it must do that, by accepting its own true potential: who Christ was and what Christ really taught.

Now what about Christianity? Christianity has at times and in good part stood in life and thought for its own normative event: God's love in Christ. Christianity occasionally has paid full attention to Jesus Christ, but very occasionally. For its entire structure of doctrine has denied its Lord by its eternal dualism of heaven and hell, which is a complete contradiction of the living ultimacy of Christ as love. In life, Christianity has steadily rejected the Christ by sanctifying the status quo — in nationalism, in race relations, in all the ways of the world.

III

I can't tell you how sick it makes me to hear people preach Sunday after Sunday with never a prophetic word except self-satisfaction about ourselves. I was going to say we most likely may perish. Let me not prophesy our perishing. God can still save us. But if we perish, as well we may, we are going to do so mostly because Christianity has steadily rejected Christ and its preachers have steadily refused to prophesy.

I came away this morning — I won't say where I went to church — but I came away this morning, and I am not critical, believe you me, because I love the church, and I love the Word, saying to myself, "Preachers are a league of liars! Preachers are a league of liars!" That's what I said. There wasn't one word in the sermon about the reality of our international situation in terms of acknowledgment of failure and problem this morning when our action in Cuba ought to have been on our Christian conscience.

Now Buddhism, to take one more illustration, does not make universal love ultimate to doctrine or practice, but it witnesses to God's call by its refusal to take ordinary experience as standard for religion, by its keen sense of evil, and especially by its central legend that the Buddha, instead of accepting his own deliverance, was willing to renounce it in order to save the people, and also its dwelling on compassion both in thought and life. Buddhism can realize its own true potential by refusing its actual center and accepting as center instead its own true potential, by becoming a universal community of concern open to eternal compassion. It may be easier for the Buddhists and the Hindus to accept Christ than for us Christians. It may be. We may too long have neglected what he means.

IV

Oh, how I wish I could break loose and preach the living Christ until in a world so full of destruction, so full of danger, the power of that reality once more could become the dominant fact. I believe in the joy of the gospel; I believe in the reality of it; I believe in the lift of it. I am convinced that the universal love of God, in a kind of life and within a community of concern, can awaken in the world the creative, co-operative spirit. In this spirit we can solve our common problems as men together. I believe that in this universal love we can be lifted to the power of mutual acceptance that shall help thaw out the wintry banks of religious indifference, impotence, and antagonism, and let the growth

of spring give new promises to a world of creation wherein men can be more challenged by the opportunities than weighed down by all the dangers and all the problems.

I believe that there is hope for the world, if we genuinely accept the full meaning of who Christ was — the universal love of God, whom we can completely accept and completely trust. I believe with all my heart that we can have a new day, as people, as churches, as a world, when we begin — instead of merely using this for our own self-protection and self-promotion — to cut loose and apply it in all the relationships of life, insofar as we start with ourselves, with the family, with our churches, but go on to the ends of the world with the whole gospel. We must accept the reality of Him who once in human history was so thoroughly imbued with the presence of God that we *know* what reality is and how we can *live* it. "Do you suppose God is the God of the Christians alone? Is he not the God of the non-Christians also? Certainly, of the non-Christians also, if it be true that God is one."
God bless you!

Benediction

Father, in this solemn hour of human history, we lift up our hearts to thank thee that thou hast not left us without a standard, nor hast thou left us without the power of salvation. We lift up, in this crucial hour of human history, all the nations and all the groups that make for peace. O, thou Heavenly Father, help us to turn away from the foolish ways of cold war and perishing, and give us within thy grace such faith in thy ways with the world and among the nations that we shall be willing to co-operate unto the saving of the world for our children's children. We pray thee for all religions, that all the people, whatever religion they have, may come to know thee in such a new way. And particularly we pray thee for ourselves as Christians, because we feel we need it so much, whether Orthodox, Roman Catholic, or Protestant, or whatever denomination to which we may belong, that we may come to realize how small and unimportant are these differences before thy face, and that in a common stead to co-operate in a new way, until there may be a living gospel for the world.

And so we thank thee for this evening and put it with faith in thy hands. May the miracle of the Holy Spirit now take place and may the miracle of thy Holy Spirit come upon us in such a new way that we may no longer live for ourselves, but live to thy glory and for human help from us. Make us new beings as never before.

And now may the Spirit who was in Jesus be in us also, enabling us to know his truth, to do his will and to abide in his peace, world without end. Amen.

Thoughts on Preaching

✚ THE FALSE preacher is one who has to say something; the true preacher is one who has something to say. — *John Henry Newman*

✚ DO WE IMPRESS the people with the feeling that we are dealing with trifles, or with blinding and appalling enormities? . . . If I lose my sympathy, I lose my vision. Sympathy is the parent of discernment; the finer the sympathy, the more exquisite the discernment. . . . If men can feel that we know their very breathings, and that we thrill to the deepest and most secret movements of their spirits, they will suffer us to be their guides and their friends. But if our compassions are dried, our people will know our benumbment, and our preaching will fall like a shower of hard gravel rather than as a shower of soft and refreshing rain. — *J. H. Jowett*

✚ A LEAF that is destined to grow large is full of grooves and wrinkles at the start. Now if one has no patience and wants it smooth offhand like a willow leaf, there is trouble ahead. — *Goethe*

✚ AN ORATOR or author is never successful till he has learned to make his words smaller than his ideas. — *Emerson*

✚ SO MAY the truth be flashed out by one blow; And Guido see, one instant, and be saved. — *Browning*

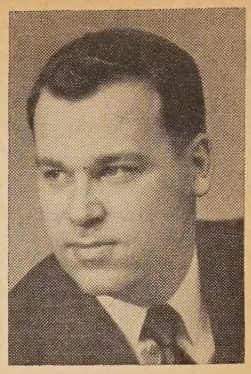
✚ THE WORLD looks at ministers out of the pulpit to know what they mean when in it. — *Cecil*

✚ THERE IS nothing so dignified as a man in earnest. — *Beecher*

✚ TO CONFRONT a bewildered and disheveled age with the fact of Christ, to thrust upon its confusion the creative word of the Cross and smite its disenchantment with glory of the Resurrection — this is the urgent, overruling task. — *James S. Stewart**

---

*From *A Faith to Proclaim* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953). Used by permission.



Philosophy and the Pulpit

By Kenneth E. Smith

BACK in my seminary days we entered the philosophy classroom one morning to find a cryptic message on the blackboard. Some frustrated student had scrawled: "Colossians 2:8." We opened to the place where it is written: "See to it that no one makes a prey of you by philosophy and empty deceit." No doubt there are a number of similar passages that might bring comfort to anyone who has struggled to comprehend Hegel or Kant. Yet, it must be acknowledged that the place of philosophy in the history of Christian thought is firmly established. The Apostle knew how to speak to the Stoic almost as well as to the Jew. In the passage from Colossians we find him impatient with speculative gyrations that could accommodate to religion but would not be committed. "The love of wisdom" does not necessarily mean a lack of involvement. When a man undertakes to speak of the great verities of life and seeks to persuade his hearers of certain ultimate principles, that man is a philosopher. If this is so, what contribution does philosophy bring to the task of preaching?

The things that modern man must know about himself in relation to God are the same things that man has always yearned to know. If the gospel is the "old, old story," the anguish of Job and the plea of the psalmist are much older. Clearly this implies something about preaching. The questions to be raised will be the ultimate ones for man's existence. Into that setting the gospel comes with its fullest meaning and relevance. The attempt to separate sharply biblical and philosophical issues is to do an injustice to both. "What is man that thou art mindful of him?" "What must I do to be saved?" Such biblical questions are the jewels of philosophy at its highest and best. They have become the meat and drink of Existentialism. Is there some good reason why we should permit the Positivists to outlaw from the field of inquiry almost everything that man really wants to know? We affirm that the gospel is God's filling of the void. The probing questions of philosophy serve to define man's need and are real questions with which the pulpit must deal.

Contemporary preaching places an emphasis upon "relevance." What this often means in practice is preaching with a clever, "up-to-date" twist, apart from biblical or historic context. It may mean a fascination with themes that are both provincial and recent. One preacher we know admits to listening to the news broadcast just before he preaches in hopes of a "scoop." This gives him a dramatic announcement as an opening illustration which is then ingeniously threaded into the message! The harsh indictment of Charles Lamb seems warranted:

> 'Tis man's worst deed,
> To let the things that have been run to waste,
> And in the unmeaning present sink the past.

The true relevance of what we preach is found, rather, by tracing the taproot back to the ultimate ground in which we rest our case. We mean to insist that ultimate questions are relevant.

We have also heard a great deal about answering the questions that people are asking. A noble sentiment, of course. Suppose, however, that man does not choose to ask the ultimate questions? Suppose the man who is apparently at worship is in reality preoccupied about his next car payment. Theoretically his heart is restless until he finds rest in God, but as a matter of fact he is restless about his finances. From his point of view the relevant message "to meet his need" is "How to Get Rich Quick" or "How to Stop Worrying." The church doesn't need to apologize for not meeting needs that it was never established to meet. It is necessary on occasion, therefore, to intrude the questions which men *ought* to be asking. Preachers have been known to poll their congregations with questionnaires to determine what people want to hear. There may be some point to this if it isn't taken too seriously. There

---

KENNETH E. SMITH, *minister of Denver Seventh Day Baptist Church, Denver, Colorado, is a graduate of Garrett Biblical Institute (B.D.) and Northwestern University (M.A.). He was a Rotary Fellow at Edinburgh, 1955-56, and taught philosophy at Milton College. Mr. Smith is a member of the six-man commission of the Seventh Day Baptist General Conference.*

must be a transcendental element in preaching that is held in holy awe as the Word of God. Let man wrestle with the profound issues of life and death. He needs this more than he needs a panacea for his momentary frustration. To begin with what is man's real condition is to bring a philosophic discipline to the task of preaching.

In the treatment of such issues the philosopher combines with the preacher as he deals with doubt. He will be honest and compassionate. It is not an easy undertaking to face the alternatives to the gospel while steadfastly proclaiming the gospel. We must know some of the problems, however, if we are to convince when we proclaim all of the answers. What does man believe today and what does he doubt? We are told that most of our contemporaries do not doubt as openly as their fathers before them. We must hold our cheers. Man may not be thinking as much, either. The questions of life and death are put aside in favor of more practical considerations. Even his acceptance of the church is pragmatic. He seeks to dwell in the House of the Lord without coming by way of the Valley of the Shadow. In a society where God is a kind of cosmic sheet of asbestos there is no place for doubt. It would be a hindrance to successful living. Indeed, the pulpit which recognizes doubt may be subversive of the mental quietude of our religious scene. It was Bacon who observed, "A little philosophy inclineth man's mind to atheism, but depth in philosophy bringeth men's minds about to religion."

Philosophy is not so foreign to theology as we have sometimes desired to think. Even the despised Positivist has a contribution to make to the pulpit; namely, the problem of conceptual clarity. Do we convey with integrity what we mean to convey when we preach? It is the task of philosophy to see to it that we hew a coherent pattern of concepts, whether in one type of communication or another. Effective preaching is dependent upon the mutual understanding of our terminology and our ideas. It seems remarkable that after years of weekly sermons a congregation may not know what the preacher really means by the words God, Sin, Salvation, etc. Yet, it does happen all the time. Philosophy need not be a semantic strait jacket, but it rightly insists upon communication of ideas.

Generally, the preacher feels that he is a theologian rather than a philosopher. Theology means to him a *Christian* study of religious concepts and he is not too anxious to cross the boundary line into eclectic speculation. Philosophy probes everywhere. It seems to dwell longer on the questions than on the answers. It is perfectly understandable that the Christian preacher should be impatient. He knows "Whom he has believed." Granted. But too often we preach from the point of view of the committed, namely, from our own perspective, and we enrich the content of the faith without speaking to those who doubt that very content. In a deeper sense, then, a philosophic approach is an evangelistic approach.

Blaise Pascal (1623-1662) accepted the discipline of projecting himself into the place of the atheist and the indifferent. His famous *Pensées* were to be an apology for the Christian faith. In sketchy outline he tried to raise the ultimate questions for every man. Pascal said: "There are only three kinds of persons: those who serve God, having found him; others who are occupied in seeking Him, not having found Him; while the remainder live without seeking Him, and without having found Him."

Do we preach to "all sorts and conditions of men"? When we bring the ultimate questions into the pulpit we will be relevant in the deepest sense. The basic problems of the ages will make for vital preaching today.

A Morning Prayer

O God, our Father, we bless thee for the knowledge
That beneath the crust of things as they seem,
Thou art working to make all things new,
Both in the world about us and the world of the spirit.

Help us to beware of glorying in our own achievements;
Keep us from exalting mere outward manifestations of success,
That are not accompanied by humility of soul.
Teach us that justice and mercy
Are more important than space and speed.
Impress us that pride, prejudice and greed,
In the age of space travel are more perilous
Than in horse and buggy days.
Give us wisdom, that the finest venture
Is to bring heaven to earth,
Rather than taking earth to heaven.

We beseech thee, most earnestly,
To give us grace to use our greatest efforts
To bless all mankind:
To foster friendship and abolish poverty;
To heal the sick and educate the ignorant;
To correct the causes of crime;
And to promote peace throughout all the earth.

Forgive our slowness and incompetence
In achieving thy good purposes,
And our contentment with wrongs that we could remedy;
While we frantically strive to outdo others
In less important matters. Amen.

— Leroy Cabbage, Peoples Presbyterian Church, Milan, Mich.

Ordination Prayer

ALMIGHTY GOD, our heavenly Father, who has given us thy Son, Jesus Christ, to be our liberator and raised up generations of ministers by whose labors the church is planted in all lands, look now in love on thy servant _____ who is called to this ministry. Replenish him with the truth of thy gospel. Adorn him with zeal and courage, with tenderness and insight, that both by word and by example he may faithfully serve thee as a minister of Jesus Christ.

Help him always to hold in remembrance how great is the treasure which is committed to his charge; how precious each life for whom Christ died; how noble Christ's body the church whose unfulfilled mission it is his high privilege to serve.

Teach him to pray without ceasing for power greater than his own, for love stronger than he can ask or think, for understanding greater than intellect, for sensitivity more delicate than intuition, for persistence more enduring than human strength.

Help him always to keep his door open to men and women and his window always open to God; to give love to little children; faith to questing youth; hope to failing age. Make him diligent in daily study of the Scriptures and the Word of life, so that he can bring forth treasures new and old; reckless of personal comfort, safety or profit, so that he will give himself wholly to the ministry whereunto it has pleased thee to call him.

Help him early in his ministry to establish those attitudes and habits which will make him grow riper and stronger from year to year. And renew in him each morning the experience of thine indwelling presence, thy forgiveness and sustaining grace, so that he will know beyond any question that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, in this life and in the next; to the glory of thy name and the enlargement of thy church, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen. — *Harold E. Fey.*

Prayer for New Ministers

ALMIGHTY and eternal God, whose hand is on the ages and whose heart among thy people, we praise thee for the goodness of thy greatness and the greatness of thy goodness. For all thy mercies to us and all men we give thee thanks, and acknowledging our many sins in thy sight, we beseech thee so to blot out our transgressions that we may live again with thee as children with their father — forgiven as we ourselves forgive.

O thou whose hand is on the ages and whose heart among thy people, let now thy hand be

on this moment and thy heart among this congregation. Especially this night we pray that thou wilt work thy holy will upon these men and women soon to leave us for their posts of service in thy name. What we could do for them has now been done, our Father, and none knows better than ourselves how little we could do. We have tried to enlighten their minds, to kindle their hearts, to cleanse their souls and to increase their strength. But none knows better than ourselves that our own minds have often been dark, our own hearts cold, our own souls stained and our own strength weak; and in the vastness of the task the needs have exceeded our knowledge, our knowledge has outstripped our will, and our will has been greater than our goodness. We have done in blindness those things which we ought not to have done, and in languor we have left undone those things which we ought to have done. But now the doors are closed through which we might have moved to be of greater help to them, and being always in thy hands, now they are in thy hands alone.

Minister, we pray, to those who seek to be thy ministers. Strengthen them where strength will serve thy purposes, and weaken them if only frailty can be a bridle to their pride. Grant them wisdom if, being wise, they bend their knowledge to thy bidding, but confuse them in their confidence if they have have grown too smart for patience, too shrewd for faith and too cunning for kindness. Give them the dignity of those who understand their origin in thee, but save them from the pompousness of those who have forgotten that thou didst call them to be servants. Let not their knowledge of thee come only from the lips of other men, nor their faithfulness to thee depend upon thy preference of them, nor their love of thy people be withheld until they find thy people lovable. Spare them not the cross lest they never see the empty tomb, nor keep them from the night that is the doorway to the dawn. But surely through the dark and firmly through the day be thine the hand that helps and thine the heart that heals until in the joy of the garden they see the triumph of the hill, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. — *Roy Pearson, dean, Andover Newton Theological School, Newton Center, Mass.*

The Soul's Invincible Surmise

By Paul Waitman Hoon

By faith Abraham, when he was called . . . obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. Hebrews 11:8.

Scripture: Genesis 12:1-9; Hebrews 11:1-13.

THE BIBLICAL saga of Abraham who by faith, when he was called of God, obeyed and went out not knowing whither he went, presents a view of life that I trust speaks with truth to us this morning. For while Abraham may seem to us a shadowy and alien figure from the ancient past, he yet personifies the great Jewish-Christian conception of life as a pilgrimage and holds up before us a vision of the human spirit in its life before God as at its best a pilgrim spirit which moves with faith into the unknown.

Now to some modern people, admittedly, this vision of life will not be congenial. To those who want things safe and solid beneath their feet, with clear-cut signposts warning of wildernesses and simple maps showing short cuts to Canaan, Abraham will seem less a hero than a fool. Indeed, a man who does not know where he is going and yet goes out can in one sense be said to be on the dumb side. There are situations in life where if you do not know where you're going it's too bad. Let us hope that a student knows where he is going when he enters his college or university; that he chooses his courses with care and not by default; that he knows the way to classroom and laboratory and arrives on time. Moreover, the advice that we preachers and parents and teachers are not bashful about giving you to make up your mind, to plan ahead, to know where you are going and to prepare for your vocation, is not necessarily bad advice. Yet at the risk of undermining all this and even of contradicting myself, I submit that there is much to be said in the largest sense for going out not knowing whither you go, especially if, like Abraham, you go out in faith.

I

For in the largest sense does any of us know, really, where he is ultimately going? And what is more, do we want to know? To know what wilderness of trial or mountains of visions or Canaan of promise is in store for us; what shrines for the heart we shall build; what armies of aliens battle; what lands conquer and what boundaries stake out; where we will end up in this world of space and time and history; or what invisible world of beauty or truth or of eternity beyond the farthest stars shall lure and claim us? Actually, what we are talking about is the mystery of life and of death and of what may be beyond death; the mystery of life's surprise and wonder and destiny all gathered up in the purpose and mind of God. In short, to go out not knowing whither is the way that man at his best is meant to live. What smites and inspires us is just this infinite dimension of things; the mysterious understanding, in the language of Scripture, that we are strangers and pilgrims upon the earth and that we seek a better country — that is, a heavenly one. Yes, there is much to be said for Abraham who by faith went out, not knowing whither he went.

But if Abraham did not know where he was going, he did know one thing — that if you take life as a pilgrimage you have to decide what you're going to leave behind and what you're going to take with you. "Now the Lord had said unto Abram, 'Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee.' " That is quite a lot to leave behind, isn't it, your house and your homeland, your kindred, the cultural and ethnic structure of values and ideas and customs that give a man rootage and stability. Now it's not that the pilgrim in leaving these things behind is to be an exhibitionist, like some of the "beat" and "beat-up" people on the road today. Nor is it that he

---

PAUL WAITMAN HOON, *professor of pastoral theology at Union Theological Seminary, New York, writes from Cambridge, England, that he is on sabbatical leave this year, studying on a grant from the American Association of Theological Schools. Dr. Hoon, an ordained Methodist minister, served churches in New York, Connecticut and Pennsylvania before coming to his present post at Union in 1953. During 1958-60 Dr. Hoon was president of the American Association of Seminary Professors in the Practical Fields.*

is a kind of spiritual or cultural masochist who neurotically inflicts on himself the pain of severing himself from the past. No, Abraham did take with him some things that bound him to his place — his wife Sarah, his nephew Lot; the substance they had gathered, silver, gold, cattle; their tents; some stones to build an altar. The true pilgrim is not just an airy vagabond. There is a sense in which the pilgrim is a conservative who treasures certain things from the past, and heaven help us if as we set out on our pilgrimage we do not take in our hearts the faces of those whose love brought us into the world and cherished us; whatever substance of truth life has yielded to us; some stones of reverence to build an altar to our God as he reveals himself; some tent of moral conviction amidst the storms of temptation to shelter us.

Yet the authentic pilgrim is perhaps better known for what he leaves behind than for what he takes with him. And in the adventure of the soul he often has to leave behind one thing in particular that Abraham had to forsake — his accustomed gods, the deities bound up with his tribe and dwelling place and with his history and breeding. Surely that must have been hardest of all for Abraham, as for any faithful Jew to whom solidarity with his nation and cult means everything. And it may well be hardest of all for some of us to leave behind the deities and shrines of our accustomed loyalty, the gods, shall we say, that up until now we have possessed for the sake of the God who would possess us. Would these gods be the fairy tale images printed on our minds from Sunday school pictures in childhood? Would they be the soft, self-centered idea of God whose main business is to protect and favor, like the conception of God a boy named Tommy a psychologist tells of who always saw the Christian cross in a church chancel as meaning "T" for "Tommy"? Would they be the distortions of God that perhaps our tangled emotional relations with our parents helped foster — and let no one underestimate the effect on our religious images and beliefs of the psychological conditioning of our homes? And yes, would they also be the false caricatures of God the institutional church has been not unwilling to impose on us, or the tribal gods of the American way of life, or the only-God-can-make-a-tree deity of our Emersonian friends?

Now sometimes, be it said, a man "conceptualizes his faith in the true God in formulae that seem to deny Him," and one shrinks from ever laying harsh hands on any man's private faith. Who knows what the true God beyond all our broken images may mean to us? But is it not also true — in an epigram of William Temple — that "it is as much idolatry to worship God according to a false mental image as by means of a false metal image," and that in the journey of the soul as we go out not knowing whither, we too may have to leave behind some deities we have previously trusted in? Never forget that it is the living God who seeks us — more than the gods we have yet found — who matters most, and to more than one pilgrim there may well sound a summoning voice: "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred and from this house, unto a land that I will show thee."

II

But while the pilgrim is known by what he leaves behind, he is also marked by the spirit in which he sets out, and here we have to go beyond what we so far have been saying. It is not as simple as declaring that we are like Abraham in that we too go out uncertainly, not knowing whither, and let it go at that. No, the great thing about Abraham — and the great thing that marks the pilgrim — was the motive with which Abraham began his pilgrimage. The motives impelling us to our journey are often mixed and we can get sentimental about them without much trouble. The chap who looks like a pilgrim and goes out not knowing whither is sometimes only a man driven by demonic ambition; or a dilettante in disguise who deserves Unamuno's biting description, a "Don Juan of ideas driven by intellectual lust"; or an irresponsible adventurer who takes his pilgrimage as a game and then writes an autobiography likely entitled *My Safari Into the Unknown*. No, you can tell the authentic pilgrim by what supremely marks Abraham and by what these chapters of Genesis and Hebrews were written to tell us: "*By faith,* by faith Abraham went out not knowing whither he went." A man's faith or the absence of it — that is the great thing.

But there is faith and there is faith, and we can easily get semantically crossed up here. By faith you can mean that you vote for God and that religion is a good thing or that you have confidence that someone or something will turn up, even God. Or you can say that faith is something you infer from a structure of thought or distill from experience or end up with after a course in Bible or in the philosophy of religion. But Abraham's faith was different from these. For one thing, strangely, it was in part something he started with more than something he ended up with: "By faith Abraham went out. . . ." Now when we think of faith, especially in an academic community, we often think of it as something a man wins or achieves, as something that comes at the end of the journey rather than at the beginning. This is natural and faith, in one sense, can mean this. But the faith of the pilgrim is different and just possibly we may be more like Abraham in this respect than we are willing to admit. Faith sometimes is not so much to be sure as to be concerned, and if the issue of faith is important to you at all, even though many ques-

tions are still unanswered, then I would say that whether you know it or not you're already a pilgrim and you have already started on your journey. To be really concerned is to be on the way. And more than one student today, I suspect, is like a young war veteran in one of Somerset Maugham's novels, to whom, after he had journeyed long but unsuccessfully in his search for religious reality, a Roman priest wisely said: "My son, you are a deeply religious man who does not believe in God."

III

But the faith of the pilgrim, further, is often an act of obedience and decision more than an inquiry of the mind or a longing of the heart: "By faith, Abraham, when he was called, *obeyed*. . . ." Now there are some things in life you cannot obey until you first believe in them, but there are also some things in life you cannot believe in until you obey them — unrealized ends that conscript the soul; the substance of all the things we are not ashamed to hope for; loyalties worth a man's living and dying for; above all, God and his purpose for one's life. Faith in this sense is something you learn by doing more than anything else, and God himself, in a strange metaphor of a Jewish theologian, only becomes real when like a brick wall you butt your head against him. It's not a do-it-yourself deal, no. "Faith does not create its certainties out of its own valor," it has been written. But without the valor there is no certainty, and without the obedience there is no truth. A friend put it well in a story he once told me about a professor in the college of engineering of Lehigh University, who alleged that he had never been able to appreciate the music of Bach. At last, with what was perhaps an engineer's pragmatic gusto, he decided that he would get at Bach and he joined the famous Bach Bethlehem Choir and for a year attended all the rehearsals and sang in the concerts. At the end he said frankly and simply: "It was not until I sang Bach that I learned Bach from the inside." Only after he acted toward Bach's music did he appreciate Bach's music. And so it is with God and his pilgrims. A man will not get very far in the pilgrimage of faith until he yields his aloofness and launches out with a thrust of the soul. I recently read this sentence: "Many intellectuals today are now accepting Christianity as an interpretation of life, but they are not yet prepared to accept it as a *way* of life." But the Christian faith will never become real that way.

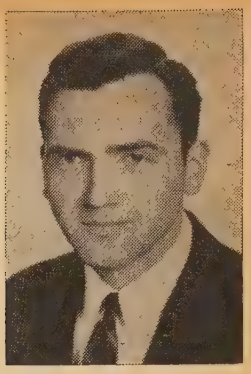
But Abraham was called before he obeyed, wasn't he, and that is perhaps the ultimate thing about the pilgrim. Somehow he hears a call, he beholds a vision, he is summoned by a strange and secret voice and his soul responds with an "invincible surmise." Where that call will take him he does not usually know, as Abraham did not know. The journey of faith conforms to no fixed pattern and we had better understand that. It leads one man to build an ark, another to offer a sacrifice, another to renounce a royal heritage, another to break loose from some Egyptian slavery, another to go not knowing whither. But however it be, if the pilgrim is known by what he leaves behind and by the motives that impel him, all the time hovering over him or rising up within is a vision to which he gives himself, a call from on high that claims him.

We can resist that call, let that be said. Indeed we can so stubbornly resist it that we cease to hear it, and the last estate of such a man is worse than the first. Again, we can misunderstand that call. I suppose the commonest problem I deal with in talking with my students is the question: "How can I know what God is saying to my life, what his will is for me? And how am I to translate his call in terms of my own being and situation and experience?" A full answer to that question is beyond this sermon, but part of the answer might be these words of a British theologian: "A man's business is to surrender as much of himself as he knows to as much of God as he knows." Another part of the answer is that some of us may never be sure, and that God in his mercy forgives our confusion and makes even our wrong decisions to praise him. There is such a thing in the life of faith as doing the wrong thing for the right reasons, and God understands that, I think. Again, God's providence is known in retrospect as well as in prospect, and how often does it turn out that not until we had obeyed his call as best we could and looked back at it through all the arches of the years, that we know he had spoken and we had answered.

But God will settle for all our uncertainty *if*, if we will only listen to his call — and that is really what I want to say this morning — in the claim of the world's pain upon our hearts, in the speech and in the silence of prayer, in the luminous meaning the words of Christ will flash to our minds as we live with his mind and kneel before him in his living and his dying, in the short-range duties that lie near at hand that become steps in the long-range purpose God will unfold if we but trust him, above all in the promise of his faithfulness to us in our faith and unfaith. For while I have spoken as if faith were something we hold, the sum of the matter is that it is God's faithfulness that holds us, his everlasting mercy to our folly and sin, his Word and will ever calling to our souls, his righteousness that endureth from generation to generation and his truth that abideth forever.

"By faith, Abraham, when he was called, obeyed; and went out, not knowing whither he went."

How a Vain Man Limped Into the Promised Land



Wrestling with Angels

By Arthur A. Rouner, Jr.

And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day.
Genesis 32:24.

HE HAD NOT planned for this place to be a battlefield. That midnight hour was not supposed to be the hour of trial. The decisive encounter was to be tomorrow, on the other side of the Jordan — not here. Jacob was not prepared for anything tonight. It was tomorrow that Esau was coming; tomorrow that he feared; tomorrow for which he had been making his elaborate preparations. For Jacob, the son of Isaac, was returning to the land he had left in disgrace. He was returning to the people who remembered him as a cheat, as the one who had stolen his brother's birthright, as the son who had lied and schemed before the blind eyes of his father to win an inheritance that was not his.

And now, after years of the same clever dealing, he was returning to that land again, a rich man. And Jacob was afraid. His messengers to Esau had come back with the word that his brother was coming with four hundred men to meet him! And Jacob had cried out to God: "Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me. . . ."

All his plans hinged on the conflict coming tomorrow, in broad daylight, beyond the river. That was why he had divided his men, his flocks and his herds into two companies and sent them across the river to wait for the dawn. That was why his wives and children had been sent along for protection. That was why he had sent gifts of sheep and goats and cattle ahead in the hope of appeasing Esau. Because Jacob — proud, self-assured, successful Jacob — was afraid. Always he had had his own selfish way. He had no humility before either man or God. And it was not repentance that he felt now; no shame at what he had done to Esau — only fear at what Esau might do to him! So there, on the eastern bank of the river Jordan, Jacob was left alone. Tomorrow, he thought, would be the big day. Tomorrow would be the great encounter, the decisive battle.

But he was wrong. It was the unexpected hour, the hour of darkness instead of daylight, the hour of aloneness — when all help was gone — that became Jacob's decisive hour. It was when he stood alone, in the midnight darkness, that Jacob was made to fight the greatest battle of his life. It was then that his *real* adversary — the Lord God himself in angel form — came out of the shadows to wrestle for the soul of Jacob! For as our text records, ". . . there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day." Jacob is surely the patron saint of all the souls in history who have ever wrestled with God. And so I ask, as we recall the exciting story of this lone man's encounter in the darkness, that we draw out these lessons and apply them to ourselves.

I

The first important fact about this story is that Jacob was alone. In thinking that the critical moment of his life would be the meeting next day with Esau and his four hundred men, Jacob had played directly into God's hand. Every animal and every man in his whole company had been sent across the river. When Esau came, Jacob wanted to be sure that he himself was surrounded by his family and his armed men. He did not dare to face his severest trial alone. And so it was that God caught him just the way he wanted him: when the camp was deserted; when the night was dark; when Jacob was bereft of friends and forces; when he was alone.

It is terror to be alone. We may never care deeply about those around us, but we hate to be alone! We do almost anything to escape aloneness. We invite friends in or we go to the movies or we turn on the television so that its friendly face and blaring voice make us forget that we are alone.

ARTHUR A. ROUNER, JR. *is minister of the Eliot Church of Newton, Massachusetts and the author of* The Congregational Way of Life *(Prentice-Hall, 1960). He is a graduate of Harvard College and Union Theological Seminary, New York City, and was ordained to the ministry in 1954 in Cadman Memorial Church, Brooklyn, where his father has been minister since 1946.*

"God pity," we say to ourselves, "those who must face their aloneness and suffer the grief of solitude!" But even worse for him, Jacob was alone with God! The Apostle Paul himself declared: "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God!" And there was a day in ancient Israel when a guilty people looked with terror at the booming thunder and jagged lightning rolling across the face of Mt. Sinai, and cried out to Moses: "Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die!" It is a frightening thing to be alone with God because God levels all our defenses and self-deceptions and makes us look at ourselves. And what we see is never pleasant and fine and pure. . . . But this can be a good thing. It was a good thing for Jacob. Suddenly, standing in that dark and lonely wrestler's ring with the angel of God, it no longer counted that Jacob was one of the richest men in the Sinai peninsula, or that he was clever enough to have outwitted every man he had ever met. That night he was only Jacob the man — in the presence of God.

Too many of us get by on reputation, on social standing in the community, or on vocational success. The world accepts us at face value. And we begin to accept ourselves at face value! But to stand absolutely alone — before God — is to be stripped of all self-deception, and to have eyes to see the truth! If there is anything you and I need in our spiritual lives, it is this very thing that was forced upon Jacob: the courage to be alone.

II

Now notice the second important fact about this story: Jacob wrestled. Whatever the form of the mysterious antagonist, he embodied the power of the spirit of God and his combat with Jacob was to the finish. All his life long Jacob had been slipping like an eel out of bad situations, always getting the better of someone — a birthright from Esau, an inheritance from Isaac, wives and cattle and sheep from Laban. But this time there was no escape, no slippery exit. This time Jacob had to stand and fight.

Do you see the symbolism of this struggle? "And there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day." A sinful and guilty man wrestling with God in the dark until the dawn comes. The soul of man struggling through the darkness of confusion and misgivings and sin until God makes some light of truth to break over him, and the darkness is banished forever by the shining glory of a new insight, a new faith, a new life!

This was what happened to Jacob that night — the same "dark night of the soul" through which all the saints of history have passed: Our Lord Jesus himself sweating great drops of blood in Gethsemane until he could say at last, "Nevertheless not *my* will, but *thine,* be done"; Augustine, feeling like an animal chained to his unholy passions and wretched life in the brothels and gaming houses of Carthage, until at last he could honestly beseech God, "How long, how long shall I go on saying tomorrow and again tomorrow? Why not now, why not have an end to my uncleanness this very hour?"; Martin Luther, agonizing for long nights in the little cell in the Wittenburg convent until Romans 1:17 finally yielded for him its blessing: "The just shall live by faith."

The lesson in Jacob's lonely wrestling match is that no man can find any faith, any power, any oneness with God in his life unless he comes to grips with God as Jacob did, and perseveres.

This is one of the elements most lacking in today's revival of religion. And it is tragic! Hundreds of thousands of quite sincere folk who will flock to a vast arena, or turn to their TV's to see a great evangelist, but then will go no farther. The excitement of the great meetings is wonderful, they are impressed with the crowds, they even feel lifted up and spiritually exhilarated — but they will not really wrestle with the angel! They will not take that as just a beginning, and then go home with Bible in hand to read and pray and win a faith worth having!

Yes, we want the good feeling of mass-meeting or living-room-TV religion, but we do not want the plain hard work of prayer-and-pondering religion! What is the matter with an all-night vigil? Why *not* get up early in the morning to pray? Why not *have* a faith that's worth fighting and struggling and weeping and working for?

III

The third important fact about this story is that Jacob won a blessing. Locked in combat for hours on that dark promontory the angelic figure finally cries, "Let me go, for the day breaketh!" But Jacob, hanging on for dear life, answers, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me!" Then "What is thy name?" said the angel. And he answered: "Jacob." And finally, pronouncing his blessing, the angel declares: "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed."

When finally the sun rose upon the exhausted Jacob, and the heavenly adversary had disappeared, it rose upon a changed man. I do not mean only that his name was changed. Jacob was a new creature. The crafty, scheming ways had been torn from him. By daring to face God alone, and to wrestle on through the night, he had — in the angel's words — won "power with God and with men." I believe the lesson for us here is that for those who persevere with God there is always a blessing of spiritual power and strength. But the pity is that so many people do not believe it! They haven't any idea of the tremendous power that could be unleashed in their lives if they would stop

flirting with Christianity and start working and praying and wrestling with it.

Some of you may have read about the amazing results of the "prayer fellowship" of a certain Episcopal parish in Philadelphia. One person who had been helped by the prayers of those people wrote back: "I am not manifesting, as yet, perfect health, but my spirit lives in a new world. . . ." Their minister says: "The members of the Prayer Fellowship take time to work at praying. . . . They expect results. As always with that kind of praying, they get them."*

Oh, if only the irregulars, the "half-triers," the dilettantes of religion would just once determine: "I *will* pray, and pray hard, till the light shines. I will grapple with the Bible till it yields up its truth to me. I will go week after week to church until its gospel pierces my soul!" If they would work at their faith that way they would be bound to win some blessing. Their efforts would be repaid a thousandfold. It has never failed.

They might be wounded in the process. There might be hurts and sufferings along the way. Jacob himself was lamed and bore the mark of his struggle all the rest of his life. When at last he crossed the Jordan and the sun rose upon him, he limped. But he limped into the promised land!

When faith becomes difficult, when doubts arise, when the Church fails to meet your expectations, it is always easier to give up and pull out. But I tell you that God is *with* the wrestler, the man of courage, the man who faces honestly the eternal realities. Because Jacob wrestled honestly through the night, his meeting next day with Esau became not a battle, as he had supposed it would be, but a joyous reunion of brothers. Jacob's whole life, from that night on, was transformed. God sees the wrestler through.

I charge each one of you today: be a wrestler. Come to grips with God.

*Stanley High, "More Things Are Wrought By Prayer," *Reader's Digest*, June 1957, p. 127. Used by permission.

The Symbols of a Christian's Dedication

Ready for Either

By Walter R. Wietzke

Philippians 1:21-26.

I KNOW of no symbol that better defines the state of the Christian in this world than that of the Moravian Church. Between an altar and a plow there stands an ox and underneath is the caption, "Ready for Either." How true! On the one hand Christ's man faces the possibility of becoming a sacrifice, an oblation, a kind of offering. On the other, he must face the ever-current probability of living beneath the yoke, spending his days and energy as a beast in halter. He must be ready for either, and it is these alternatives of sacrifice and work that command our attention on this national holiday, this Labor Day week end.

It seems proper that we begin with the proposition that the imminence of sacrifice is not simply theoretically but practically the case in this modern era. For example, estimates have been made that there are more martyrs to the cause of Christ in this twentieth century than in the nineteen centuries which preceded it. Whether this is statistically accurate or not, we have grown up in and lived in an age where a continual flow of information has been forthcoming from such places as Germany, Estonia, Latvia, etc. regarding Christians who died or are dying, suffered or are suffering, for their faith. "You will be hated for my sake" has not been the idle rant or the empty threat of a Galilean carpenter, silenced by the passing of centuries; it is an attested, contemporary fact!

While geographical factors have helped protect us from our enemies in the past, now even Christians in America dare not scoff at the possibility of "being sacrificed for Christ's sake" as

WALTER R. WIETZKE, *an ordained minister of the American Lutheran Church, is a graduate of Capital University (A.B.), Capital University Theological Seminary (B.D.) and Chicago Lutheran Graduate School (S.T.M.). Mr. Wietzke has been minister of St. James Lutheran Church of Detroit, Michigan since 1953.*

something remote, or as a consideration which is actually irrelevant to their faith. It is, whether we like it or not, an acknowledged possibility. Obviously, these things are not said in order to increase despair but to heighten the determination to be faithful witnesses, regardless of the cost. We must consider the "altar" with a godly readiness. Like the cell in the blood stream that exposes itself to air, to die, and by its dying helps to stem the flow of blood from the body to save the life of the body, so the Christian, as a cell in the body of Christ, if called upon to lay down his life for the Master's cause, must do so.

This kind of resignation is not to be equated with pagan fatalism. Fatalism is fatalism because it sees and accepts no purpose in the occurrence of events, believing only that what will happen will happen. Therefore, because events are basically meaningless, the fatalist does not try to influence them. Christian faith, at this point, believes something different. It believes there is a purpose, though often hidden, to all that occurs; that we are a part of a great denouement — a working out of God's purposes in history. So, the mark of the saint is to share in events and shape them as best he can, though he face life or death, altar or plow.

The Scriptures are replete with such examples. One is reminded of Isaac's willingness to be offered, or Paul's almost flippant attitude when it seems as though he were standing on a street corner casually tossing a coin to see if he should expose himself to martyrdom or continued labor.

> "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. If it is to be life in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account" (Philippians 1:21-24).

And what examples of this readiness are forthcoming from post-New Testament history! In the martyrdom of Polycarp, the Proconsul threatened him by saying:

> "'If thou dost despise the wild beasts I will make thee to be consumed by fire, if thou repent not.' [i.e., change, and give obeisance to Caesar.] And Polycarp answered, 'Thou threatenest the fire that burns for an hour and in a little while is quenched; for thou knowest not of the fire of the judgment to come, and the fire of the eternal punishment, reserved for the ungodly. But why delayest thou? Bring what thou wilt.'"*

Or who can fail to be impressed with the readiness of contemporary martyrs like Dietrich Bonhoeffer, or the unnamed martyrs of East Germany, the satellite countries of the Soviet Union or of the Union itself, or of China? They were ready for the altar, ready to be sacrificed.

But is not all of this talk just a bit foreign and out of place to the modern American? What does it say to the conventional churchgoer in Detroit, or Wapakoneta, or Philadelphia? To some it says nothing. They are not amenable to most of the lesser demands of discipleship, let alone consideration of the drastic crisis of dying for one's faith. To others it says, "While the acute situation is not currently present where your life's blood will be poured out, yet you must ever be ready for this possibility." And I think many of them are. But these have learned something more. For them, the term "sacrifice" has taken on a wider connotation. They know that there is implied within it living for one's faith as well as dying for it. They know that the sacrifice of the self which "dies daily" is sometimes more difficult than facing the prospect of a martyr's death.

Perhaps we have become too enamored of dramatic sacrificial deaths and too contemptuous of undramatic sacrificial lives. We are slain by the desire to do something great, and little comprehend that the best and most effective martyrdoms involve all moments of life.

Now that brings us to the unglamorous alternative of work, for which the plow is an apt symbol. It represents constant, wearisome, exacting toil. But it is also a symbol for saints. The plow should have as much significance as the altar, possibly more, for the plow connotes "continuing sacrifice."

However, it is in the very idea of being a living sacrifice, doing "the continuing work of God," that some Christians err all of the time and all Christians err some of the time. Slain by the desire to do something great, zealous to show the militancy of their faith, they renounce the "world." But what tragedy lies in the fact that the renunciation is badly directed and the "world" is wrongly understood! "World" becomes the equivalent of the created order and instead of rejecting the evil in the order, they tend to reject the order itself — a common error in Christian history. Behind such rejection stands that false dichotomy which divides things into spiritual and material, and the awareness is seemingly not present that, in the best Christian terms, the material realm is also spiritual.

The Christian cannot avoid the plow. He cannot despise work. He cannot renounce his world. He must let plow, work and world — as well as altar — be symbols of his dedication and his means of praising God. He must understand that work involves all effort expended to God's glory and the well-being of the neighbor, and let us underscore *effort expended!* A radical change is needed from the self-excusing twentieth century shibboleth, "the dumb ox is working himself into the grave" — the "wise" man's way of ridiculing work and worker. Few see in it, or want to see in it, the sophisticated evil which when shorn of its trappings is simply maximum compensation for minimum effort expended — something for nothing! Regardless of rank or status, no Christian

* *Documents of the Christian Church*, translated by Henry Bettenson. (London: Oxford University Press, 1943). Used by permission.

dare to succumb to that heresy; in fact, he must adamantly oppose it.

He who is thus accounted a dumb ox must be reappraised. If he appears "dumb" — that is, "unwise" because he expends himself in honest effort — let no one discredit him by accusing him of stupidity. If "dumb ox" refers to a silent response to calumny, then consider Christ's "ox" may merely be muted by a superior intelligence and sense of charity.

To be a Christian is a difficult thing. To be ready for either sacrifice or work is a difficult thing. To be ready for sacrifice or work *where you are* is the most difficult thing of all. Often we think "if only I'd be in different circumstances, how much more productive I'd be." Maybe so, but to pull the plow in the field you now occupy is the real test of readiness and saintliness. The whole question finally centers in our willingness to be, under Christ, the one between the altar and the plow. Either self-concern and preoccupation will make us reluctant to do this or, like Paul, living in Christ, we shall stand in constant readiness.

It would be a sad commentary on our faith if we declined the altar in critical times. It would be a sadder commentary on our faith if we neglected the plow in conventional times. A Christian must assuredly be ready at all times — for either.

THE MOURNERS BENCH

By G. Hobab Kish

I WAS present at a meeting the other day when a prominent preacher was introduced to speak on a controversial subject. This in itself ought to make the headlines because many of our preachers would rather be caught stealing than facing any vital issue. The fellow who gave the introduction said that this preacher was sometimes regarded as a controversial figure, but he was regarded universally as a man of integrity and courage. Then I began to raise some questions within myself, a not unusual procedure for old brother Hobab.

The first question was "What kind of questions could a man deal with which are not controversial?" How many things can a person talk about without risking the possibility of a difference of opinion? And if there is a difference of opinion, the result is controversy. We might discuss the weather, but even there we find some like it hot and some like it cold. How about heaven? The nice thing about that subject is that nobody can prove much. I read a book, a few years ago, written by a man who claimed he had been there and returned, but such experts are mighty few. Still there are many people with rather strong ideas about the subject and they differ with one another. It used to be safe to talk about mother but in our day we blame what is wrong with us on our parents. So you might run into trouble on that trail.

Since nearly everything has a controversial tinge to it, maybe the best thing to do is become an "on the one hand, and on the other" kind of preacher. You know the type. He was described by a listener who said he was not quite sure what the preacher was trying to say but he seemed dedicated to the idea of not offending anyone. Even here, however, the results are not always salutary and safe. The fellow in the middle so often gets thrown at by both sides.

Then I asked myself another question. Is the gospel noncontroversial? Jesus did not find it so and neither did Paul, Peter and the apostles. Of course they were all living in pagan environments and we live in a country that has been officially Christianized. However, Martin Luther found a number of the brethren who did not see eye to eye with him, and John Wesley faced mobs that made him long for the safety of a den of lions. I looked around me at the contemporary leaders of the churches. Every one of them is under fire from one source or another and most of them have walked through the dark valleys of opposition most of their ministries.

So I came to a conclusion: To be a Christian means to be a controversial figure. To be a preacher means to be a warrior against the hosts of darkness who sometimes sneak into churches and get into city government. If any man ever refers to me as a noncontroversial figure, I shall demand an apology. May the good Lord deliver us from the namby-pamby, watered down Christianity of our age and give us the courage to rejoice when our attack draws fire. And may we be able to do all of this in love.

When a preacher reported to John Wesley on his travels about a circuit, he was asked if he had won any converts. He sadly confessed he had not. Had he made anyone angry? He brightened up and said, "No." Whereupon Wesley turned away in despair as if the man were hopeless. Our fathers thought that anger was often a sinner's first response. So does the Book of Acts. Where there is no controversy, the people perish.

The New Life in Christ

By George Gerald Parker

Romans 8: 1-13. (Phillips translation.)

IN THE Scripture lesson this morning Paul said, "The whole creation is on tiptoe to see the wonderful sight of the sons of God coming into their own." That may have been true of Paul's world but today we would change it to say, "The whole creation has been on tiptoe to see who gets the first man into space." Now it has happened. Next, a man on the moon or on some distant planet. And then a whole colony of people settling in some new world. There are those who say seriously that this will solve the world's population problem — settling our surplus people in these new worlds of space. On at least one point they are wrong. It will not be a "new world." It will rather be a new place of habitation for the same old kind of people.

If we are therefore looking for a new world — I mean a truly new world of new people — we are following the wrong procedure. This is *not* the new frontier! A new world will be uncovered, as has been said, not by exploration into *outer space* but rather exploration into *inner space*. Here is the real frontier! So we need listen carefully to Paul when he says: "If any man is in Jesus Christ he is a new person altogether — the past is finished and gone, everything has become fresh and new."

This is the most hopeful, joyous, exciting sentence that ever came from the pen of man — the new life in Christ. If Christian faith can support this claim in the modern world in a convincing way, then we will know why the ancient world called it "The Gospel" — which means "The Good News." It can still be the best news in this world or any other world. And that takes us all in. We are all vitally concerned with newness of life. Each year we spend nearly a billion dollars for cosmetics to put new faces on old people. But we know that it is only a disguise which is skin deep and that Paul is still right when he says, "The outer man decays, but the inner man through Jesus Christ can be renewed day by day."

Apropos of this is a brand new novel about Christ. So that you will be sure *not* to read it, I'll give you the name — *The Secret of the Kingdom.* The reviewer says: "There is a tendency among novelists to see Jesus as a sweetly sentimental figure, white-robed, bloodless, bearded. He is always a little out of focus, shimmering, remote, smiling His faint smile of compassion upon the world."

Compared to such perversions of the gospel, Romans is rough and difficult. It teaches a God of grace, overflowing, undeserved, unearned, free grace. We find this difficult to take seriously. It is just too good to be true until we realize that God is truth — the only truth. And "too good to be true" is a ridiculous phrase.

Romans presents us with the fact of the fallenness of man — our own natures perverted by pride. Certainly we don't like that. We prefer something a little lighter and fluffier about human nature. One man said: "You Christians have a religion that makes you miserable. You are like a man with a headache. He does not want to get rid of it but it hurts him to keep it." Yes, some of us think that when we hear from Paul some facts about ourselves which are not all sweetness and light. It reminds me of the patient who is very ill. The doctor comes and knowing the patient's dislike of any kind of negative news, says, "Now there's nothing wrong that a couple of pills won't cure." But a few days later the patient died, for he was really sick in spite of the fact that he didn't like facing it. But suppose another doctor came and said: "You are seriously ill. Only an operation can save you." And the patient had the operation and recovered.

Religiously, where do we choose to live? In a dream world filled with soft music and poetry in which no problems are recognized? Or do we have the courage to live in the real world? There are many who hearing the text, "If any man is in Christ, he is a new person," will say, "I don't want

---

GEORGE GERALD PARKER *has been pastor of the Congregational Church of Manhasset, Manhasset, Long Island, New York, since 1943. During his pastorate the church has grown from a membership of 100 to a present membership of 3500.*

to be a new person. I'm quite satisfied as I am. Why should I go through the pain of changing myself?" If so, Romans will be an affront to you and you won t quite get its message. And also the strife and anger on the front page of the newspaper today will be a puzzle. For Romans says something is seriously wrong with you that only faith in the grace of God can cure — that grace breaks into our lives through the Lord Jesus Christ.

If you are ready to take this fact seriously in this real world, then you are prepared to consider the most exciting and joyful fact known to mankind — that "If any man is in Jesus Christ, he is a new person."

Status

In Christ we have a new status with God. I use this word "status" with some hesitation. Vance Packard has devalued the status idea with his book, *The Status Seekers.* He has made it seem a frantic striving for superficial values. Our trouble is that God offers us a status which we don't believe or can't accept. In our terrible ignorance of God, we still think of him as the awful Judge before whom we are hopelessly in debt with no chance of getting free or measuring to the requirements of the court.

But, said Paul, "In Christ we have a new standing in grace through the access of Christ." Through no effort of our own we are freely forgiven, cleansed, and we stand without the burden of guilt in the assurance of God's love. New status indeed, and the price is faith. The status with God cannot be bought with money or through some particular forms of religious faith. This is why Christianity is *more* than a religion. It is primarily a declaration of the new creation. On the bulletin board of mankind it placards "There is a new creation and that new creation is made known in Jesus Christ." We can participate in that new creation "by faith."

Motivation

In Christ we have a new motivation. Motivation — that's the power that makes us move and act.

One of the major human problems today is that of motivation. We do the right things for the wrong reasons and our wrong motivations contaminate our good works. The boy, for example, who turns his back on the love of his family, sins against them. Then he wants to win back his place and so does all kinds of good deeds yet he does them for a selfish reason — to get something for himself. His motivation is all wrong.

In New York City some years ago, there was a man who became noted for his good works. One day a friend asked him the secret of his driving desire to help others. He explained, "In a great crisis in my youth, a man stepped in the breach and in so doing lost his life to save me. Since then I have wanted to express, through my deeds, my humble thanksgiving for what he did for me." This is the motivation of the Christian. A man once died for us. Instead of trying to live good lives to prove how good we are and to win something from God by our goodness we now strive to live the Christian life out of overwhelming thanksgiving and joy for what we have received from God. We are the recipients of God's free grace in Jesus Christ. Our lives are literally transformed. No longer are we driven under the lash of guilt but instead drawn by thanks and joy. The love of God becomes the central motivation. "We love him because he first loved us."

Power

"If any man is in Jesus Christ" he has new power in his life. Status — motivation — power. You see we are using words that are central to our lives today.

Said Paul, "Once the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead lives within you, he will, by that same Spirit, bring to your whole being new strength and vitality." How wonderful! We need strength and vitality to meet the tests of today. But how dare Paul make such a claim? Is his advertising beyond proof? No! For Paul, in effect, says our trouble is we are living with a twisted notion of God. We are afraid to let God in, for he is pictured as the grim Judge. "The truth is," said Paul, "God is always for us and never against us." He is grace. This does not mean we shall never sin again. But it means the power of sin is broken for we can *always make a fresh start* with divine assistance. God is not against us. He is for us.

The classical example of this is Peter and Judas: both sinned; both fell; both denied their Lord. But Peter understood the grace of God. He got up with divine assistance to continue in Christian discipleship, to be a great leader of the church, while Judas, in despair, went out and hanged himself.

It all happened right here in this very world in which we live. It is not a dream or wishful thinking. God really broke into the history of the world of which we are part. Right here Christ met the same sin and trouble we meet. He defied and defeated it upon the cross. This is not too good to be true, nor too bad to be true. It is historical fact.

When I was in seminary, I had a friend who spent a whole year writing his thesis on two small Greek words — "En Christo." It all seemed very puzzling to me. Why should a person spend so much time on so little? But now I know. These are the key words of the New Testament and of our lives. "En Christo" means *in Christ.* "If any man is *in* Christ he is a new person." This is a fact. This is the key to the letter to Romans. Such a person lives in a new world. It is not merely an

old world somewhere out in space that is just now occupied but the new world of the spirit. After all, this is the only genuine newness our world affords.

Shortly before World War I a baby prince was kidnapped from one of the royal houses of Europe and carried away to South America. There he grew up not knowing who he actually was. It was not until he was nearly twenty years of age that he discovered that he was actually a prince. But this knowledge transformed his behavior and his attitudes. He said, "I must act like what I really am. I am a prince."

That is what the Christian gospel says to each one of us. You are a child of the Almighty God. You are the recipient of God's overflowing grace and love. You have an eternal origin and destiny. Christ died for you! Now act like what you are. Live up to your heritage. Be yourself as God created you to be. "The whole creation is on tiptoe to see the wonderful sight of the sons of God coming into their own."

Marking Each Child With The Mark of Forever

Flesh and Spirit

By Thomas H. F. Masson

That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. John 3:6

THINGS are made to come to pass. But a man is made to become.

If the earth of the field is to be transformed it must be taken up into the life and flesh of the vegetable by mystery. Thus, earth is transformed into grass. If the grass is to be transformed it must be taken up into the life and flesh of the beast by mystery. Thus, grass is transformed into cattle. If cattle are to be transformed they must be taken up into the life and flesh of man by mystery. Thus, roast beef becomes the flesh of man.

That which is born of the flesh is flesh and man's flesh differs from the flesh of cattle, from the flesh of vegetables, from the flesh of the earth not a whit, for the man who is born of the flesh is flesh and his flesh will feed the earth and the earth will renew this earth-bound cycle.

Sometimes we name the earth our mother, for from her we came forth and unto her we shall return: earth to earth, ashes to ashes, and dust to dust. "Man, that is born of woman, hath but a short time to live. . . . He cometh up and is cut down, like a flower. . . ."

But how dearly we love this flesh and cater to its demands during the short time it has to live. It is washed. It is nourished. It is admired in comely masses. It is attired. It is cut into and repaired. It is studied. But this flesh, as all flesh, comes to pass.

The earth in the field has not built a highway; the grass which transforms the earth into itself has not designed a cathedral; the cattle which eat the grass have not scanned the planets of the cosmos nor peered into the mysteries of their own blood cells. Between the highest of the animals and the simplest of men, there is a great gulf fixed. The spirit of man is the highway and cathedral builder, the astronomer, the biologist. For man is made to become — to be, forever.

But how we neglect this forever spirit of man's. We educate it for seventy years, but not for eternity. It hungers and we let it starve or feed it gelatin. It becomes soiled and we let it fester and grow cancerous. It is allowed to grow like the weeds of the field and not like flowers in a garden, as a precious thing.

The difference between a man and any other earthly creature is what we call "the image of

---

THOMAS H. F. MASSON, *under appointment by the overseas mission department of the Protestant Episcopal Church, is vicar of a unique congregation of army, navy and air force families, St. George's, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Every three years his entire congregation moves on as the armed services personnel are rotated, and a new congregation moves in. Mr. Masson is a graduate of Wayne State University, Detroit, and pursued his seminary studies at Huron College, London, Ontario.*

God." There is a longing in the heart of man, even the most pagan of men, for the *true* home of the spirit. Sometimes this spirit of man is asked to be content with the apparent foreverness of the earth. Sometimes it thinks its home is the creation instead of the Creator.

Sometimes the author or the artist pours all of his heart and all of the considerable power of his art into the worship of the earth and of its cycles and seasons; birth and death and rebirth; spring and winter and spring. He makes of this cottage his permanent home, because that is what his faith permits. His faith is this: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh" and he concludes: "Therefore, let me celebrate the flesh; let the flesh be worshiped!" He finds in his identity with all earthly creatures his final comfort and his meaning.

As all men, this man has been born of the flesh and is flesh — but has his spirit been born of the Spirit? It is a noble spirit, but it casts wildly about and cries aloud on its knees before creation, uncontent. His is the voice of one passionately *seeking* the Creator of the creation.

For beyond the creation there is Another and He is truly forever. If a man is caught up in His life, by mystery, he is changed *now* into another order and lives *today* in another dimension. It is the step beyond the flesh which man is privileged to grasp as gift. As the earth became the flesh of grass and the grass the flesh of cattle and cattle the flesh of man, so man who dies to himself and is born of the Spirit, is spirit.

Who is this Spirit? Who asks man's death and proffers another birth; a new being? Who gives foreverness to man?

> The Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind and said: "Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me. Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? . . . When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy? . . . Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? or hast thou walked in the search of the depth? . . . Hast thou perceived the breadth of the earth? declare if thou knowest it all. Where is the way where light dwelleth? and as for darkness, where is the place thereof? . . . Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? . . . By what way is the light parted? . . . Out of whose womb came the ice? . . . Canst thou bind the sweet influences of the Pleiades or loose the bands of Orion? . . . Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts? or who hath given understanding to the heart?"

This is the Creator of the creation who speaks. He is the one who is to man as removed as man is from the ape, but is able to speak to man on personal terms and does in Christ by the Holy Spirit.

He is the One who says, "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit," and who invites the earth-bound man *to become;* to live eternally in *the now;* to share a life that pervades and yet transcends the life of flesh upon earth. He calls his little image out of the animal cycle of earth to earth and dust to dust and ash to ash.

A man belongs to God. Parents claim his children as their own. Nations claim his children as their own. Mankind claims his children too. But man belongs to God.

And so we baptize children in obedience to the command of His Christ — and make the good beginning, and mark each child with the mark of forever on his brow. If it is a mystery that earth and grass and cattle are taken up and transformed into flesh higher than themselves, how much greater the mystery and the wonder that the Spirit of God should take the spirit of man *now* into the forever with him — not tomorrow, not at the natural death, but at the baptism of children so that spirit is born of Spirit and the life of forever begins in the midst of the earth where God and man together meet and where this body and this flesh may be brought into subjection and made to serve the Maker.

I know a man who in a better moment stood beside the ocean in the sand under the starbright skies. He thought this; perhaps your heart has thought thus too:

> When becoming began to be, the sea
> first cast white brine pearls here at the land's end
> where now I sink by the bone of my heels,
> brown coconut and down, rooting in sand.
> I am slapped by the star stare of the sky
> stinging my cheek because I meet her eye,
> her come-hither-I-dare-you-look and say:
> "You only seem to be forever things."
> The Word with God who speaks your surf to sound,
> who shapes your lump of nothing in His midst
> and shakes thereon a yeast of stars and fish
> brings you to pass, but me He brings to be.
> One night to kill and rob my flesh you'll come,
> but I at Jesus' board shall sup as son.*

* Copyright 1961 by Thomas H. F. Masson.

✚ IT IS the first rule in oratory that a man must appear such as he would persuade others to be; and that can be accomplished only by the force of his life. — *Swift*

✚ WHAT TOO many orators want in depth, they give you in length. — *Montesquieu*

✚ GENTLEMEN, the first thing in a sermon is lucidity; the second is lucidity; and the third is lucidity. — *James Denney*

✚ THERE are no middle men in the Divine Market. — *James Barr*

✚ PULPIT discourses have insensibly dwindled from speaking to reading; a practice of itself sufficient to stifle every germ of eloquence. — *Sydney Smith*

Is Your God Obsolete?

By Bevel Jones

"He makes a god and worships it, he makes a graven image and falls down before it." Isaiah 44: 15.

TODAY everybody is talking about images: the father image; the presidential image; the corporation image. The truth is that we think in terms of images. It was the French skeptic, Voltaire, who said: "God made man in his own image, and lo, man has returned the compliment." God is objectively real and far from being a figment of man's imagination, but the subjective element in religion is undeniable. There is God, and there is God as we understand him.

Human history is to a great degree the history of religion, and the history of religion is largely a matter of the images men have formed of the mysterious being whom they conceived of as creator and sustainer of the universe. This explains the various religions of the world, the splintered nature of Christendom, and the development of religion in the Bible itself. The apparent change in the character of God in Scripture is really a change in man's conception of God.

Now there is nothing in the Bible to support the view that religion is necessarily a good thing. The witness both of scriptural and secular history is that religion has sometimes been a blight rather than a blessing to the human race. God's worst problem is often what passes for religion. We do not need more religion today. If anything, we already have too much religion. What we do need is the right kind of religion. Isaiah's satirical study of the idol-maker is a vivid illustration of an obsolete religion.

Notice first that the idol-maker's religion was inadequate for his own spiritual and moral needs, because everything centered around the worshiper himself. The result was a tailor-made deity, designed to suit his own ideas and serve his own interests. Like Narcissus, he actually worshiped his own reflection.

Now in all fairness we must admit that this is a grotesque exaggeration, but it points up a danger to which all of us are liable. It is human nature to try to make God one of us, to bend his will to ours. God is popular today; religion is in vogue. But with that popularity has come a kind of religion-in-general, a palsy-walsy theology that has reduced the Almighty to a sort of celestial hail-fellow-well-met. And so we speak of the "Man upstairs," or the "businessman's Partner." Or that noted theologian, Jane Russell, refers to her God as a "livin' Doll."

The idolater manipulates his god. And this is our fundamental error: to use God as a means to our own ends. Left to our own selfish devices we will select a religion or a god that makes little or no demands on our lives. What we want in religion is peace of mind, adjustment, the maximum of security — fringe benefits included — and the least possible interference with our moral conduct.

How strikingly in contrast to this chummy, convenient, colloquial religion is the experience of Isaiah, who saw the Lord high and lifted up, reigning in glory and majesty over all the earth. The worshiper's immediate response was one of wretchedness and woe. There was agony in his soul as he felt the terrible tension between God in his holiness and man in his sinfulness. Is this not the real God — the God who quickens the conscience, makes us quite uncomfortable, and who pursues us relentlessly with a righteous and redeeming love until his will is done in our lives?

Now let us move on to a second observation. The idolater's deity was tragically inadequate when it came to relating his religion to the vast world of which he was a part.

When I went to college I took with me a small God who proved later to be inadequate for the world of expanding knowledge into which I was entering. A course in historical geology started me to questioning. Then a course in anthropology really threw me. Before then I thought I knew

---

BEVEL JONES *organized the Audubon Forest Methodist Church in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1949, and served as its pastor for ten years during which time the membership grew to 1500. Now minister of First Methodist Church, LaGrange, Georgia, Mr. Jones also serves as instructor at LaGrange College and writes a column for the* LaGrange Daily News.

where I was going. Now I didn't even know where I had come from! My intellectual sojourn carried me further into the field of philosophy, and I found out what they meant about it being like a blind man in a dark room looking for a black cat that isn't there. It was disillusioning, to say the least; but through it all my faith was made stronger and more meaningful than ever before. In other words, I found that God could pass college with flying colors if I would only give him a chance by letting my conception of him grow along with my advancement in other fields of knowledge.

Unfortunately, Christians have not always been ready to adjust their religious thinking to scientific fact. They fail to see that God and truth are on the same side; indeed, are one. God is truth, and he will have us accept him as truth, or not at all. It is vitally important, in view of the astounding discoveries of modern scientific research, for us to understand that there is no insoluble conflict between religion and science. Not when we see science as a further revelation of the ways and wonders of God's creation. Kepler, the German philosopher-scientist, had it right when he said, as he looked up from his mathematical computations, "I think thy thoughts after thee, O God."

Henry Norris Russell, who presided over the Princeton Observatory for nearly half a century until the close of World War II, was giving a lecture one evening about the Milky Way. His audience was awe-struck as he told them of the millions upon millions of stars in the galaxy and how many light years it took for the light of the nearest star to get to earth. Afterwards, a naive little woman came up to him and asked rather anxiously, "Dr. Russell, in view of the things you have told us tonight about this universe of ours, can I still believe in God?" To which the scientist replied, "That depends altogether, madam, on how big a God you believe in."

A final commentary on the idolater's religion shows that it was inadequate in relationship to his fellow men. His was an exclusive deity. Here was a purely private god, designed as the writer says, "to sit in a house." Professor Whitehead's famous definition of religion as what a man does with his solitariness is only a half truth. Love is the essence of true religion, and love is fulfilled in community. To the extent that community is restricted, our God is obsolete.

It took the Hebrew children a long time to get it into their heads and hearts that Jehovah was not theirs exclusively; that they were not his pets; that he was not looking out for their special interests, fighting their battles and destroying their enemies. A professor of Bible told me that he once asked a class of fifty or sixty how many knew anything about the Book of Jonah other than that Jonah was swallowed by a whale. Only half a dozen raised their hands! A great missionary drama, reduced to a fish story. The four chapters of this remarkable book depict God's struggle with a bigoted little nationalist to get him to share his salvation with his nation's worst enemy — Nineveh. The climax comes when Jonah goes and preaches to the people of Nineveh, and gets mad at God and everybody when the people repent and are saved.

The problem persisted in the New Testament. The Jews who accepted Christ weren't at all sure that the Gentiles should be brought into the fellowship and the early church got itself entangled at the very beginning in the net of human relations. And the end is not yet.

It's trite but true that the world has been reduced to a neighborhood, and now it remains for it to be made a brotherhood. Our scientists are admitting that the kind of world in which we live makes the Christian spirit a necessity. Brotherhood is no longer an elective: it is a requirement.

The late F. Scott Fitzgerald suggested a story that he did not live to write. It is the story of a widely-separated family that inherits a house in which they are all compelled to live together. The moving finger of time has written that story. The human family is now in precisely that situation. We must make sure that we grow to the conception of God that we have in Jesus Christ: a God who is no respecter of persons, who loves all people of every race, creed and nationality. Brotherhood is the imperative of our time. Let us rejoice that in the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we have a God who is able to bring it to pass, if we will but give him our full allegiance.

Flight from Prophecy

(Continued from page 3)

Lord's will or with those who are merely saying, "Lord, Lord"?

The fact is that the minister's communication with his people is not the one thing necessary. What he should say is not, "I must maintain my communication with my people" but "My people must maintain their communion with God and it is my role to help them do so." The times come — we can be grateful that they are rare — when the minister can maintain his communication with his people as a man of God only by breaking with them as a man among men. The times come when he must stand over against them in judgment and in challenge if he would keep them for God rather than for himself. For their sakes and for God's sake he must be willing to live that life and speak that word which will lay God's claim upon them, even if the people repudiate him for doing so. See Amos, Jeremiah, Jesus.

— KYLE HASELDEN

The Classical Approach to Homiletics

By Vernon L. Taylor

ALTHOUGH he may be ignored at other times, the preacher is in the driver's seat on Sunday. For one hour the members of his congregation trust him to direct their thinking. With such a responsibility the driver must know where he is going and how he is going to get there. In an age of eight-cylinder activity the preacher must have more than Model T ability. To take advantage of his opportunity he must have something to say and must know how to say it effectively. People criticize a preacher more often on the basis of his method than on his message. The main reason for this criticism is the failure of the preacher to realize that effective preaching is an art based on the psychology of the audience.

The roots of Christian preaching are both Jewish and Greek. The Jewish tradition emphasized the need to have something to say, but developed virtually no theory on how to say it. The Greek tradition supplied the theory, which can be traced through Augustine, Alcuin and Whately to the best of classical rhetoric today. The classical approach combines both of these sources into one dynamic concept, embodying a theology of preaching which makes the listener central to the sermon. This is true to the best traditions of classical rhetoric, for far from emphasizing content to the exclusion of the audience, or beauty to the exclusion of communication, classical Christian rhetoric has always emphasized that preaching is an event, an action which takes place between the preacher and the listener, in which there is the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

According to Broadus, homiletics "is simply the adaptation of rhetoric to the particular ends and demands of Christian preaching."[1] It is the classical rhetoric of antiquity to which he refers, not the artifice of later days. Classical rhetoric is "the faculty of discovering in a particular case what are the available means of persuasion."[2] This is not the manipulation of artificial techniques; it is the discovery and use of correct methods, with the audience always at the center of attention.

There are five constitutents of rhetoric which form the basis of rhetorical theory and criticism: Invention, Arrangement, Style, Delivery, and Memory. *Invention* involves the choice of materials, their appropriateness to the subject, and their suitability to the audience. *Arrangement* considers the proper co-ordination and subordination of these materials, with special emphasis on the sequence of ideas as they lead the listener to the intended conclusion. *Style* is concerned with the use of language to which the listener can respond with reference to his experiences. *Delivery* develops the principles of presentation, audible as well as visible, in terms of gaining and maintaining the attention of the listener. *Memory* adapts experimental studies of retention and learning, and shows a preacher how to help his audience remember as well as how he can recall his ideas.

Homiletics, the adaptation of these principles to the preaching situation, should be the focus of all theological studies. Homiletics takes them all and adds its own methodology, without which all knowledge would be useless. Like a cook preparing a meal, a preacher combines biblical studies with theology, church history, ethics, and counseling. Mixed thoroughly in proportion to the needs of his audience and baked in an oven of inspired rhetorical theory, the finished product will be a suitable presentation to fill the emptiness of the listeners. The danger comes when it is only half-baked!

In order to adapt the principles of classical rhetoric to Protestant preaching, the student must develop his preaching ability in four areas: Theory, Practice, Appreciation, and Related Courses. Some persons feel that all theory courses are sterile. While it may be dangerous to overemphasize forms and rules of rhetoric in homiletics, it should be said that the real dangers come from misuse of theory. The sermon should be theoretically sound, but the composition should never draw attention to itself. The "silver-tongued oratory" of the past was weak at this point because it was art for art's sake. The principles of any art ought never be ignored, but that which is the best art does not seem to be art at all. While it may be true that genius begins where rules end, most preachers are not geniuses.

However, being trained by rules and theory does not of itself make a preacher able to preach well. He may know all the rules and simply be a "rule-of-thumb mechanic." It is necessary to know what lies behind the rules if we are to understand them. Therefore, the second area for emphasis should be practice preaching. The preacher needs to express himself, criticize his efforts as objectively as he can, have them criticized by more competent critics, and then re-express himself in the light of the critiques. Practice preaching is not easy — or ought not to be. While a practice sermon should be based in a thorough understanding of theory, the situation is artificial, the audience is critical, and the setting is nebulous. It is no wonder that seminary students dread the ordeal. There is no justification for this if practice preaching merely helps students exercise their voices. Practice preaching sessions must have a live audience and must be at least equal to the graduate speech courses in the best schools of speech in the country.

Because a preacher needs to appreciate the place of his most important task, there must be an emphasis on the third area: appreciation of preaching. This should include courses in the history of preaching, in evaluation and analysis of contemporary preaching, seminars on the literature of

[1] John Broadus, *The Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, Weatherspoon edition (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1944), p. 10.

[2] Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, Tr. Lane Cooper (New York: D. Appleton Co., 1932).

VERNON L. TAYLOR *holds degrees from Illinois Wesleyan University (A.B.), Boston University School of Theology (S.T.B.) and Northwestern University School of Speech (Ph.D). A Methodist minister, Dr. Taylor has been lecturer in preaching and worship at Saint Paul School of Theology (formerly National Methodist Theological School), Kansas City, Missouri, and first presented this article as a paper to the faculty and students of that institution. This month, Dr. Taylor becomes chairman of the speech department, Central Missouri State College, Warrensburg, Missouri.*

MORE MINISTERS ARE READING...

THE INTERNATIONAL LESSON ANNUAL edited by Charles M. Laymon; lesson analysis by Roy L. Smith. This stimulating and comprehensive commentary for 1962 has a **new** Pronunciation Guide, also subject indexes. 448 pages. **$2.95**

ENCOUNTER WITH CHRIST, Merrill R. Abbey. These "preaching ventures" in the Gospel of John accent vital encounters with Christ and the creative relationship between Christian faith and the contemporary challenge. 176 pages. **$3**

MORE THAN SURVIVAL, K. Morgan Edwards. Chapters which speak hope of the needed religious, moral, ethical, and social revolution to nourish and "extend the life of the Western world." 128 pages. **$2.25**

CHRISTIAN AFFIRMATIONS, Costen J. Harrell. Dealing with such subjects as Love, Grace, Faith, Life, Death, and the Coming of the Kingdom, Bishop Harrell has set down a clear, inspiring picture of the core of Christianity. 128 pages. **$2**

PASTORAL COUNSELING FOR MENTAL HEALTH, Samuel R. Laycock. Among the important features of this concise manual is the section dealing with the specific agencies and resources to which ministers and parishioners can turn for help. 96 pages. **Paper, $1**

GREAT EVANGELICAL PREACHERS OF YESTERDAY, James McGraw. Significant studies of 24 "pulpit greats" — from Wycliffe, Huss and Luther to Moody, Meyer and Jowett. 160 pages. **$2.75**

THE ADVOCACY OF THE GOSPEL, Donald O. Soper. The lively Lyman Beecher Lectures by one of Britain's most forceful and compelling preachers. 112 pages. **$2.50**

Order from your Bookstore

Abingdon Press

Publisher of THE INTERPRETER'S BIBLE

Who Pays if You're Disabled?

By Andrew Hobart
President,
Ministers Life & Casualty Union

You should be concerned about disability—it could happen to you! Let's take a look at some statistics . . . The incidence of disability among ministers shows that 18 out of 100 will suffer disabilities lasting 6 months or more during their working lives.

Life insurance can provide for the future needs of your family in the event of your death. You can make provisions for retirement by purchasing endowment or retirement income policies. But, how easy it is to overlook a permanent disability benefit—your answer to "Who pays if you're disabled?" Such a rider may be attached to most life insurance policies.

At Ministers Life, for example, the disability benefit offers two-way protection:

It provides a monthly income of $10 for each $1,000 of insurance, after six months total disability under age 60. This continues until age 65 or prior recovery or death.

Premiums coming due during the disability payment period are paid by the company. You continue to receive the benefit of complete insurance protection for your family and yourself.

The cost of this addition is low—at age 35, adding this rider to a $5,000 Whole Life Paid Up at 65 policy costs just $14.90 annually.

Write Ministers Life for policies available with a Permanent Disability Rider or for information on adding it to your present insurance.

ML SINCE 1900

MINISTERS LIFE
and casualty union
3100 west lake st. • minneapolis 16, minn.

preaching, and studies in the theology of preaching. While some of these may overlap other courses of study, the focus and concern should be different.

The fourth area of the classical approach to the teaching of preaching may be called related studies, for there needs to be provision of courses which develop special skills. Preaching in the conventional way from a pulpit does not make use of the same techniques that preaching in front of a microphone or camera does. Furthermore, there are some preaching values to be found in dramatic presentations, some in unique situations, some on unusual occasions. Again, problems of individual and group communication need to be understood by the effective preacher. Certainly a great deal needs to be taught concerning preaching as a part of the worship experience. In a day when increasing emphasis is being placed upon liturgy, the relationship of preaching to other elements of worship needs thorough study.

In a recent study which made "An Analysis of Contemporary Speech Education in American Protestant Theological Seminaries," W. K. Clark found that "about the best thing that can be said for the 'status of speech education in the seminaries' is that it is not rejected." Clark used "speech" and "homiletics" synonymously. He added, however, that the form of speech or homiletics training today "is that of 19th century 'elocution' more often than it is that of 20th century audience-oriented 'speech.'" He noted that "it is being taught by teachers still holding to a school of psychology [faculty] thoroughly discredited by psychologists over thirty years ago."[3]

Part of the reason for this is the separation of speech courses from homiletics. This, of course, draws lines where no separation exists, unless speech is considered to be "voice and gesturing." Speech and rhetoric are synonymous. Homiletics is a specialized branch of both, not separate from them. Another reason for this condition is that many of the homiletics courses are taught by men who have had what the world calls "success" in the pulpit. They were chosen on the assumption that one who has been appointed to a prestige pulpit is therefore an authority on preaching. While personal experience is always desirable, it is not necessary for a homiletics teacher to have had great personal success before great audiences in renowned places. The criteria on which to base a judgment of a teacher's right to teach homiletics — or any other subject — ought to be: (1) how well he knows his subject, and (2) how well he can teach it to others.

A homiletics course in a graduate school of theology ought to make no apology for directing its body of theory to the intelligence of the students. Preaching courses must be more than a series of casual tips. The growing body of literature in the field of oral communication is available to all who would learn or teach preaching. This knowledge is as adaptable to homiletical theory as to any other phase of the field of speech — perhaps more so. The man who attempts to teach homiletics today without a foundation in modern knowledge of oral communication is robbing his students and his Lord of some of the most valuable means of persuasion.

The future of preaching depends on many things. The life and times of the world in which we live will affect it, as will the influences of science and international politics. But let me venture to predict that the greatest influence on Protestant preaching will be the training obtained by Protestant preachers — not in the sophistry of preaching exhibitions, but in the rhetoric of classical Christian simplicity. Speech education in American theological schools must not only keep pace with development in other areas of theological education, but because of its position as the focus of all theological studies must grow beyond them. Graduate-level training in theology, philosophy, ethics, and Bible needs graduate-level training in preaching. The preacher in this eight-cylinder age who has an eight-cylinder theological education with a Model T training in preaching will be the saddest, most neglected man in the community.

[3] W. K. Clark, "An Analysis of Contemporary Speech Education in American Protestant Theological Seminaries." Ph.D. dissertation, Purdue University, 1960.

Pulpit Calendar

Sept. 3 — Labor Sunday, 15th Sunday after Pentecost.
Sept. 4 — Labor Day.
Sept. 10 — 16th Sunday after Pentecost.
Sept. 17 — 17th Sunday after Pentecost.
Sept. 24 — 18th Sunday after Pentecost.
Sept. 24 – Oct. 1 — Christian Education Week.
Oct. 1 — World-Wide Communion Sunday.
Oct. 8 — 20th Sunday after Pentecost.
Oct. 15 — Laymen's Sunday.
Oct. 18 — Churchmen's Rally.
Oct. 22 — World Order Sunday.
Oct. 29 — Reformation Sunday; World Temperance Day.
Oct. 31 — Reformation Day.
Nov. 1 — All Saints' Day.
Nov. 2 — All Souls' Day.
Nov. 3 — World Community Day.
Nov. 5 — 24th Sunday after Pentecost.
Nov. 12 — Stewardship Day.
Nov. 19 — Thanksgiving Sunday.
Nov. 19-26 — Share-Our-Surplus Week.
Nov. 23 — Thanksgiving Day.

UPON YOUR REQUEST

at no cost to you, in full color, the first 4 pages of the Sacred Design Catalog of products and the SDA File Folder

In answer to your many requests we are happy to provide you with the first phase of our catalogue of products designed specifically to meet many needs in your ministry of the Gospel. Displayed in this first offering are the following products:

- Matching two color letterheads, envelopes, note paper and calling cards carrying symbols of the Christian Faith. Six different designs now available.
- Posters (seven to a set) symbolizing the seasons of the Church year. Ideal for use in parish education and for home worship centers. Excellent Christmas or birthday gift for Sunday School teachers to pupils.
- Beautifully designed guest registration & communion cards.

Write today for your catalogue pages and the file folder. We trust that the SDA catalogue of products will become an important help as you minister to those whom God has entrusted to your care.

sacred design

BOX 5452 MINNEAPOLIS 8, MINNESOTA

Please send the SDA catalogue pages and file folder

Name_____

Name of congregation_____

Address of congregation (city, state, zone)

CC 8-9-61

Book Reviews

FREEDOM OF THE PULPIT. *By Lee C. Moorehead. Abingdon. $2.00.*

A PSYCHOLOGY FOR PREACHING. *By Edgar N. Jackson. Channel. $3.50.*

AN EXPOSITORY PREACHER'S NOTEBOOK. *By D. W. Cleverley Ford. Harper. $3.50.*

THESE three books provide a wide-ranging homiletical trio for the sermon craftsman. One is a succinct appraisal of the issues of freedom for the preacher as he sets about his task of proclaiming the gospel. Another brings the insights of psychological therapy to bear on the preparation of sermons. The third, and by far the best, is a splendid demonstration of relevant expository preaching.

In *Freedom of the Pulpit* is great good sense in small, unpretentious compass. In less than one hundred pages Mr. Moorehead clarifies the single subject: the preacher and his freedom to declare the Word of God in his particular time and place. The writer keeps to his subject, and like a well-cut little diamond it flashes fiery truth from its several facets.

The book does not, I think, aspire to profundity or, in current jargon, to plumb the subject of freedom "in depth." Therefore it has something immensely valuable: clarity, immediate relevance, directness. It speaks to our condition.

Again, one does not discover anything strikingly new, but one does find a remarkably concise summary of the best that needs frequent repeating. It braces a man for the attacks upon the freedom of the pulpit that are coming from certain quarters these days. More than that, it alerts us to the subtle inner enemies that steal away the freedom of our preaching. Mr. Moorehead knows how to needle our pride and to restore to us the humility and the glory of our task. He balances a passionate concern for our liberty to proclaim the full gospel with an intense awareness of our grave responsibility in so doing. He has read widely in this matter, and the little book sparkles with apt quotations and relevant illustrations.

An hour's reading will give you the book; it will also send you to your study and pulpit refreshed and alerted.

A Psychology for Preaching is introduced by Harry Emerson Fosdick as "an important book," and one must say at once that for years Dr. Fosdick has been demonstrating richly and abundantly the principles that Dr. Jackson has written about. Those who have heard and read and profited by Dr. Fosdick's sermons will not really require this book. The author points out the need to relate the dual functions of pastor-counselor with that of the preacher. I suppose there must be many men in American pulpits who are either not aware of the aching hungers in the hearts of their people or are not skilled in the therapeutic values and methods in preaching. But they will not be reading this book, this review, nor will they be acquainted with the sermons of Dr. Fosdick.

Perhaps today's seminary graduates, steeped in the theological revival of these years, should be required to read *A Psychology of Preaching* so that they may be enabled to prescribe and administer their theological medicines — sometimes in rather severe doses — with more skill and power for the healing of the diseases of our ailing people and our stricken times.

It is comparatively easy to *tell* preachers how to prepare sermons; it is something else to *show* them how the Bible may come alive in sermons that make truth vivid and compelling. D. W. Cleverley Ford's *An Expository Preacher's Notebook* accomplishes this unusual feat. It is a "teaching" book, but it teaches by example. It contains some thirty sermons, yet by no means is it "another book of sermons." By an introductory chapter on expository preaching, and then by an orderly presentation of sermons — some in abbreviated form, I judge — he demonstrates the principles of excellent exposition. Part I consists of ten sermons covering a wide portion of Matthew's Gospel. Part II provides three studies of Old Testament characters — Saul, David, Solomon — and a series of four studies of the Servant passages in Isaiah. The final third of the book gathers a group of thirteen random sermons, based upon passages in Genesis, Exodus, the Prophets, Acts, Paul and Revelation.

To read these sermons is to discover how a sound biblical scholar and a popular preacher "opens the Scriptures" to the present generation of biblically illiterate and skeptical hearers. It is a brilliant demonstration. The return to biblical theology these days has *not* been accompanied by an adequate renaissance of good expository preaching. Our seminaries turn out earnest young men imbued with "biblical theology" and with little ability to translate their treasure into coin of the realm. Dr. Ford's *Notebook* could help all of us to a richer and livelier presentation of the Word.

By some skill, hard to describe, the author succeeds in giving us sermons that do teach "how" and that will send us to our Bibles to find chapters which we can open to our congregations, as he has done to his people in South Kensington. This is a "how to" book, informed by genuine, even profound, scholarship, and transformed by a penetrating grasp of the current scene and of our personal dilemmas. — *David K. Barnwell, Christ Church, Summit, N. J.*

QUESTIONS GOD ASKS. *By Hunter Beckelhymer. Abingdon. $2.50.*

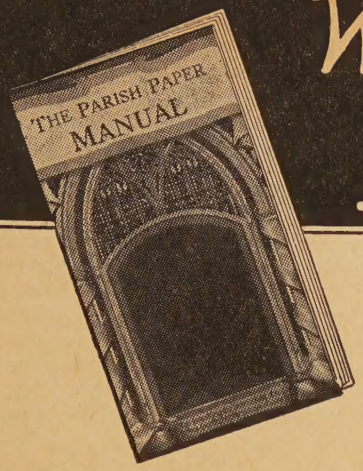
AS minister of a college and community church, Dr. Beckelhymer's sermons, the publisher tells us, "must be deep enough to hold the interest of his academic members, yet clear and simple enough for those less accustomed to theological terms." Surely the thirteen brief sermons in this book meet these requirements.

Beginning with God's challenge to Isaiah in the temple — "Whom shall

"THE CONGO WISE MAN"
That's the title of a heart-warming Christmas story about a small Belgian Congo boy.
You will find it among the many delightful tales from 35 countries —Arabia to Yugoslavia, Japan to Spain—included in
CHRISTMAS STORIES from MANY LANDS
Edited by
HERBERT H. WERNECKE
(who also gave us Christmas Customs Around the World and Christmas Songs and Their Stories)
$3.95, now at your bookstore
WESTMINSTER

Your Standard of Excellence since 1912
PULPIT ROBES
To be sure of your best appearance and long-lasting pleasure, insist on our hand-sewn, custom-tailored robes.

ROBES FOR YOUR CHOIR, TOO
Write for catalog D-41
BENTLEY & SIMON
7 West 36 St. New York 18, N.Y.



Write for this Booklet

It Will Help You Solve Your Church Problems

More than five hundred ministers now know the thrill of having their churches moving ahead rapidly, money pouring into the treasury, churches packed at every meeting — as a result of following the parish paper plan outlined in The Parish Paper Manual.

This booklet tells you how a parish paper competes with the movies, the automobile, the Sunday newspaper, with golf, and beats them decisively. It tells you where you can have a parish paper printed at less than one-third the price ordinary printers would have to charge — a parish paper that is far superior in appearance and quality to that which any local printer can produce.

You can have one of these books free of all charge and without obligation. Just fill in the coupon below and mail it today.

These Letters Speak for Themselves

"We are pleased with the general appearance of The Sanctuary Messenger." — Rev. Wm. J. Ogle, Natick, Mass.

"I am pleased with the last issue of The Friendship Call." — Lloyd D. Haag, Linthicum Heights, Md.

"We like your good work." — First Baptist Church, Gary, Ind.

"I thank you for the good service you are giving on National Gospeller." — G. T. Sledge, Duck Hill, Miss.

"The last issue of Milford Mill Minutes was shipped in record time." — Rev. Carl E. Young, Pikesville, Md.

"We are well pleased with your service and workmanship on St. Andrew's Calling." — Rev. Paul W. Kroon, West Hempstead, N. Y.

"We enjoy The Valley Lutheran. All of our people look forward to receiving the next issue." — Rev. O. E. Dolven, Horace, N. D.

"I was amazed at the rapidity of the service you gave us on the last issue of Boylston Beacon." — Rev. Howard E. Pomeroy, Boston, Mass.

"We appreciate your prompt and faithful service on Baptist News." — Rev. M. G. Shotwell, Baptist Church, Cuba, New York.

"The last issue of The Messenger was excellent. No complaints, only praise." — Rev. Robert C. Coates, Methodist Church, Philadelphia, Pa.

"I want to thank you for your splendid service during the past twenty years, and I am looking forward to doing business with The National Religious Press for many years to come. Many compliments have been received on The Colonial News." — John A. Lambert, Bayside, N. Y.

"We are pleased with your work. We have received many compliments on the professional appearance of St. James Journal." — Griffith Lytle, Baltimore, Md.

"You gave us very prompt service on the last issue of Goose Guard. We appreciate your co-operation." — Chaplain Chester L. Smith, Goose Air Base, Labrador.

"The last issue of The Prison Evangel was well received. We are most grateful for your co-operation." — Rev. Harold M. Hoeflinger, Osceola, Ind.

"The people of our congregation enjoy reading The Zion Booster. They say it is well printed and easily read." — L. Venchael Booth, Baptist Church, Cincinnati, Ohio.

FOR SAMPLES, PRICES AND FULL PARTICULARS REGARDING OUR SERVICE AND THE HELPFUL SIXTEEN-PAGE ILLUSTRATED PARISH PAPER MANUAL CONTAINIING DETAILED EXPLANATION OF PUBLISHING PROCEDURE, FILL OUT AND MAIL THE COUPON.

Do it NOW! No obligation, of course.

USE THIS COUPON

Please send The Parish Paper Manual, sample parish papers, and full particulars regarding your Standardized Service.

Name .....

Street .....

City ..... State .....

TP

The National Religious Press

523 Ottawa Ave.

GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

I send?" — we are introduced to "The God Who Inquires." Then we go back to "the oldest legendary material," the place of which in Christian revelation is succinctly set forth. Our first parents and their sons are presented in the intensely human situations into which their folly thrust them; and God's questions — "Where are you?" to Adam; "Where is your brother?" to Cain — are made searchingly relevant for today. Through the Eden story "we may indeed come into the presence of the Divine Mind, and enter into a healing and redeeming relationship with him who made us" (page 22).

We meet the herdsman of Tekoa — "Amos, what do you see?" — and through him we are confronted by a demand that we, too, see God's plumb line testing the world in which we live. God's yearning over his errant people is seen against the background of Hosea's tragic family life. Here God's poignant cry — "How can I give you up, O Ephraim?" — becomes a disclosure of what was to come later through the cross: "God's forgiveness — as high as human arrogance, as wide as human sin, as deep as human degradation. That is the gospel. . . . But let us never forget its cost. The symbols are a prophet's broken home and a Savior's broken body" (page 60).

So God's questions, whether asked through legend, prophet, dramatic poem, or through the human voice of the Son of God, become questions we ourselves must answer. The biblical setting for each one is given so interestingly that even the scripturally illiterate must be able to see that "the searching awareness of God's presence" was very real to the person whose encounter with the Almighty is being told. And in each case the thought moves surely toward a realization that such encounters and questions are not limited to "sacred literature" but are taking place here and now, perhaps at this very moment!

This is sound biblical preaching. The author has evidently learned not to find scriptural passages to support his ideas, but to listen for what the Word of God may speak through him. The result is basic Christian teaching (every sermon leads up to Christ) uncluttered by theological phrases. The clean and simple language reflects clear thinking. If some expressions are a bit slangy (Paul was so stubborn that "God finally had to clobber him" page 139) they make their point without cheapening the style. Illustrations are apt; quotations, while revealing a wide range of reading, are never paraded.

One might find points to criticize. The passage dealing with the need for Christ's sufferings (pages 107-112) may leave one wondering whether the author has yet plumbed deep enough into the meaning of the atonement. Nevertheless, the total impression which Dr. Beckelhymer's book has made on me is best expressed by a statement made by Harry Emerson Fosdick many years ago, when eager members of his class in homiletics were offering suggestions for improving a particularly good sermon by one of the students: "I confess, gentlemen, this is the kind of preaching under which I would like habitually to sit!" — *James M. Howard, Fort Pierce, Florida.*

THE TEACHING TASK OF THE LOCAL CHURCH. *By Harold Carlton Mason. Light and Life Press. $3.25.*

IT IS difficult to compress a complete course in Christian education between the covers of one book, dealing with philosophy, organization, teaching methods, curriculum, plant and equipment, teacher training, etc. This is what Dr. Mason attempts to do in 204 pages, covering even such things as summer camps and interdenominational youth movements. There are some acceptable compendia of this sort, but not more than two or three which could be called commendable. Dr. Mason deals with subject after subject in such a cursory manner that the information given is only of the most obvious nature. It takes him just two paragraphs on a half page to describe youth fellowships, but he does not even mention that any denominational youth program might exist. There is so much here, dealt with so superficially, that the reader is likely to end up with nothing about anything. In spite of frequent quotations from various educational publications, Dr. Mason reveals in a number of ways that he conceives of teaching in fairly narrow terms as classroom instruction. The methods he advocates show more concern for teaching lessons than for helping pupils grow in the Christian faith. Building plans he advocates are taken from a 1949 publication and do not provide the kind of facilities adequate for the best known teaching procedures today. If you need, in your church library, a good book on the teaching task of the local church, you ought to consult your denomination's area representative in Christian education. — *Joseph W. Baus, First Presbyterian Church, Evansville, Ind.*

THE OTHER JESUS. *By U. S. Andersen. Muhlenberg. $3.75.*

HERE is a simple and clean story about Joseph of Arimathaea, Nicodemus, Jesus and Barabbas. Nicodemus is portrayed as Joseph's adopted son. He walked along the shore of the Dead Sea, but strangely enough no mention is made of the Qumran Community. His meeting with Jesus is passed over once lightly.

Joseph is a mighty Zealot in the story, plotting against Rome and followed by some lusty cutthroats, among them the other Jesus. The best part of the book is Joseph's soliloquy after his meeting with Jesus of Nazareth.

The book is interesting, a good yarn, though the conversation is somewhat stilted. The story does not flow as smoothly as it might — perhaps because our knowledge of Scripture rebels against any distortion of its message. — *Herbert Beecher Hudnut, Woodward Avenue Presbyterian Church, Detroit, Mich.*

THE CHURCHES AND THE CHURCH. *By Bernard Leeming. S. J. Newman. $6.50.*

THIS is a book which earnest seekers after church unity will be glad to have — a volume by a sympathetic, knowledgeable Roman Catholic who does not for a moment compromise the tenets of his own faith, but who nevertheless believes that "A search for unity is surely preferable to hopeless acceptance of existing divisions among Christians" (p. ix).

Father Bernard Leeming, the author, is a Jesuit who has served as professor of theology at the Gregorian University in Rome, at the Pontifical Seminary in Ceylon, and at Heythrop College in Great Britain. He writes with the clarity, the urbanity, and the inoffensive erudition one expects of a member of the Society of Jesus. He is the kind of representative of the Roman Catholic church who would evoke a warm response from the monthly meeting of the Fundamentalist Ministerial Alliance in an Iowa

small town. Christendom needs more like him.

Father Leeming traces the history of the ecumenical movement within both Protestantism and Roman Catholicism — in Protestantism coming right up to the proposed integration of the World Council of Churches with the International Missionary Council (to be considered at New Delhi in the autumn of 1961), and in Roman Catholicism pointing to the General Council called by Pope John XXIII (to meet in the early months of 1962).

If this thoughtful, comprehensive, well-documented book can be said to have a theme, it is that the unity we seek, and the unity toward which the Holy Ghost seems to be impelling Christendom, will only be achieved when it is rooted in truth and charity.

Truth to Father Leeming is inevitably and inescapably wedded to doctrine — that is, Catholic doctrine. For this reason, any step in the direction of Catholic doctrine (as is manifested, for example, in the Church of South India) is welcomed by him; and contrariwise, any step away from Catholic doctrine (as might arise from the integration of the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council) is seen by him to retard the march toward ultimate unity because in his judgment it is a retreat from truth.

With such preconceptions, it is not surprising that Father Leeming believes that the Roman Catholic church at the present time can make its greatest contribution to church unity by remaining intransigent on matters of doctrine — that is, by holding fast to the truth of which it is the custodian until the rest of Christendom has become aware of its validity. Indeed, he twice refers with approval to the appeal Lesslie Newbigin addressed to British Anglo-Catholics that they remain intransigent in their insistence the Church of South India be held up to Catholic standards.

When is intransigence not bigotry? When it is mingled with charity. And charity Father Leeming has in abundance. Indeed, he pleads that his intransigence be not considered as due to lack of charity but rather as the consequence of the demands of integrity; moreover, his sympathetic and eminently fair presentation of points of view other than his own reveal both the precision of the disciplined theologian and the warmth of the village priest.

The measure of the man and of the book is summed up in the epilogue when he says, "A corrective for possible wrong perspectives is to turn our eyes and hearts towards the millions and millions of men for whom Christ died, whom Christ now loves, with whom Christ suffers, yet who do not know him and love him. Is it in any way due to us that they do not know him or love him?" (p. 277) — *William S. Hill, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Lansing Mich.*

PULPIT POST

(Continued from page 2)

be high due to the caliber of men who present material to you for publication. I must say that much which is sent is provocative. I do not want to give the impression that I believe your magazine to be less than what it is — a fine, stimulating presentation of religious thought for today. The idea that I want to get across is simply that from a homiletical point of view there seems to me much to be desired in many of the sermons.

I would welcome more sermons with the Harry Emerson Fosdick flavor. It is my firm conviction that what we say will challenge the church and the world with dynamic, modern, understandable, interesting, intellectually respectable preaching.

BERNARD C. JEFFRIES
Grace Presbyterian Church
Green Bay, Wis.

CHOIR ROBES
Newest colorfast fabrics available. Write for Catalog A48
E. R. MOORE CO.
268 Norman Ave., Brooklyn 22, N. Y.
932 Dakin St., Chicago 13, Ill.
1641 N. Allesandro St., Los Angeles 26, Calif.
1605 Boylston Ave., Seattle 22, Wash.

IS YOUR DISPLAY UP-TO-DATE WITH ALL 48 Church-Changing REFLECTION BOOKS
ASK FOR COMPLETE LIST FROM YOUR BOOKSELLER
ASSOCIATION PRESS
291 B'WAY, N.Y. 7

NEW BOOKS FROM
Westminster

ONE GREAT GROUND OF HOPE
By HENRY P. VAN DUSEN. The inspiring, 150-year story of two great, related movements — The Christian World Mission, and the Movement for Christian Unity — with a detailed plan to integrate the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council. $3.95

DIVORCE, THE CHURCH, AND REMARRIAGE
By JAMES G. EMERSON, JR. Why Calvin and the other Reformation leaders were "more modern than many moderns" concerning remarriage after divorce — and how present-day churches can modernize their laws. $3.95

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW TESTAMENT
By EDWARD W. BAUMAN. The background, contents, and interpretation problems of each book of the New Testament are explained by a minister and teacher who has conducted popular college-level television courses on the Bible. $3.50

WORSHIP SERVICES USING THE ARTS
By LOUISE H. CURRY and CHESTER M. WETZEL. How choric speech, drama, music, paintings, poetry, and rhythmic movement can add new depth and beauty to worship. $4.50

GOD'S PEOPLE IN GOD'S WORLD
By ARTHUR R. MCKAY. This pithy little book shows how Christians can fulfill their duties as members of the church and of society, while remaining pilgrims on earth in search of a heavenly kingdom. Paperbound $1.00

Now at your bookstore
THE WESTMINSTER PRESS
Philadelphia 7

Recent Harper books of professional interest

THE MINISTERS MANUAL 1962
(Dorans)

Compiled and edited by **M.K.W. HEICHER.** For 37 years thousands of ministers have found THE MINISTERS MANUAL their invaluable "assistant." It covers every aspect of the busy pastorate: Sermons for Youth, Hymn Selections, Seed Thoughts, Conducting Holy Communion, International Sunday School Lessons, Stewardship, Sermon Outlines, Missionary Preaching, Vital Themes, and many other features invaluable in emergencies. $3.50

PREACHING ON THE BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

By DWIGHT E. STEVENSON. An ideal source book for preparing sermons on each book of the Old Testament rather than on individual texts. Here is a tool with which the minister can enormously expand his congregation's appreciation of the impact of each Old Testament book, from Genesis to Malachi. $3.95

ARRANGING FLOWERS FOR THE SANCTUARY

By FRANCIS PATTESON-KNIGHT and MARGARET R. ST. CLAIRE. Foreword by Francis B. Sayre, Jr., Dean of Washington Cathedral. This extremely practical book shows how to recognize architectural settings and choose the types of floral decoration best suited to each; organize flower committees; learn the principles and techniques of flower arrangement; develop ideas for regular services, special feast days, etc. Many diagrams and photographs clarify directions in the text. "Excellent." — DR. DONALD WYMAN, Arnold Arboretum, Harvard. $3.50

DELIVERANCE TO THE CAPTIVES
Sermons and Prayers

By KARL BARTH. The first book of sermons by the great 20th-century theologian. "Daringly down to earth," says ROBERT McAFEE BROWN of these sermons delivered to the inmates of a Swiss prison. $3.00

SEARCHLIGHTS ON CONTEMPORARY THEOLOGY

By NELS F. S. FERRE. A creative appraisal of the current religious scene by a man whose books "can never be read without the sense that one is in the presence of a prophet and a man of God." — WILLIAM BARCLAY. $4.50

THE WAY OF ISRAEL
Biblical Faith and Ethics

By JAMES MUILENBURG. An extraordinary introduction to the life, thought, and faith of the ancient Hebrews, by one of the world's greatest Old Testament scholars. A new volume in Religious Perspectives. $3.75

NIHILISM
Its Origin and Nature

By HELMUT THIELICKE. A brilliant analysis of the philosophy of meaninglessness that haunts the 20th century. The author "is able to point men to the great venture of faith and love which alone gives meaning to life and makes it worth living." — JOHN W. DOBERSTEIN. A volume in Religious Perspectives. $5.00

DEAR MR. BROWN
"Letters to a Person Perplexed about Religion"

By HARRY EMERSON FOSDICK. "Dr. Fosdick at his best . . . The chapters in this book are written in the form of letters . . . to a person inclined to reject God . . . phrased in Dr. Fosdick's own style, with the snap, brilliance, and deftness of a very wise man." — RICHARD PHILBRICK. $3.00

MINISTER AND DOCTOR MEET

By GRANGER E. WESTBERG. How collaboration between minister and doctor can greatly increase spiritual and physical health. Dr. Westberg discusses: the spirit-body approach to health, what is pastoral care, faith healing, religion-medicine case conferences, the patient who objects to organized religion, problems of both doctor and minister. $3.50

RELIGIOUS TELEVISION
What to Do and How

By EVERETT C. PARKER. Step-by-step directions for script writing, program selection, production, direction, technicalities of the television camera, speech and action in television, promotion. Illustrative diagrams. $4.00

THE MIND OF JESUS

By WILLIAM BARCLAY. "Succeeds in being both thoughtful and scholarly . . . should make a very deep sense to men and women who don't want to be spoon fed and who do want to know more about the historic faith of the Church in Jesus of Nazareth." — BISHOP STEPHEN F. BAYNE. $5.00

ON THE ROAD TO CHRISTIAN UNITY

By SAMUEL McCREA CAVERT. An objective appraisal of the ecumenical movement during the last fifty years. Where is the ecumenical movement headed? What kind of unity is its goal? These questions are frankly and honestly explored by a man — one of the chief architects of the World Council of Churches — uniquely qualified to do so. $3.75

At your bookseller HARPER & BROTHERS, N. Y. 16